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**Dostoevsky and Tolstoy's Oblique Responses to the Epidemic of
Chernyshevskian Philosophy**

Zachary D. Rewinski

Introduction: Chernyshevsky's New People and Russian Society

Мы требуем для людей полного наслаждения жизнью.
— Rakhmetov¹

No *intelligent's* assertion of the radical agenda had more immediate or lasting influence than the work of Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky.² No other literary work had the monumental impact on radical thought that his 1863 magnum opus, *What Is to Be Done?* did. A comprehensive manifestation of the abstract philosophy he had expounded in his 1860 article “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy,” *What Is to Be Done?* provided a literary synthesis of materialism, positivism, Fourier's Utopian Socialism, and British Utilitarianism.³ Chernyshevsky fervently believed that society could correct its many problems and achieve a utopian arrangement if it followed his prescriptions. Neither Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky nor Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy disagreed with the idea that much in Russia had gone awry. Both, however, disagreed wholeheartedly with Chernyshevsky's mandates for *how* to change society, and responded, in some works overtly, in others more subtly, to Chernyshevsky's theories.

Two camps emerged in the radical intelligentsia in the early 1860s: Chernyshevsky's rational materialist disciples in one, and Dmitri Pisarev's Nihilists (in the mold of Yevgeny Bazarov of Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*) in the other.⁴ The groups agreed, at least in principle, on many social and political issues. Pisarev demanded destruction of the structure of Russian society, which was fraught with inequality, oppression, and stifling despotism;

1 Nikolai Chernyshevsky, *Chto Delat?*, in *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, 11:201.

2 Chernyshevsky's father was a priest in Saratov, and Nikolai Gavrilovich himself graduated from theological seminary and Saint Petersburg University (Irina Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism*, 39).

3 Joseph Frank, “Nikolay Chernyshevsky: A Russian Utopia,” in *Through the Russian Prism*, 187. Hereafter cited by title.

4 Andrzej Walicki, in *A History of Russian Thought*, compares the Chernyshevsky and Pisarev camps, 209-15. It is also significant to forthcoming discussion that Bazarov was not the only model of nihilist behavior for Pisarev; he also praised Chernyshevsky's Rakhmetov, adding that “ordinary people needed models to look up to in their everyday lives” (212).

Chernyshevsky described its new construction and presented the possibility of a shimmering utopian future.

Chernyshevsky attempted to unite moral philosophy and empirical science. "That part of philosophy which deals with the problems of man, just like the other part which deals with the problems of external nature, is based on the natural sciences...The natural sciences have already developed to such an extent that they provide material for the exact solution of moral problems too."⁵ Chernyshevsky's moral philosophy was grounded in a belief in the absolute truth inherent in the 'natural sciences,' and upended the longstanding belief in man's essential dualism. Physiology alone, he claimed, determines human desire in relation to the phenomena of the external world. Moral man, in turn, fulfills his desires according to the principle of 'rational self-interest,' because "a man primarily loves himself."⁶

Chernyshevsky therefore replaced all former moral codes, including the Utilitarianism and Hegelianism from whence his own philosophy arose, with a doctrine of egoism. However, altruism emerges from serving self-interest. "A man is good when, in order to obtain pleasure for himself, he must give pleasure to others. A man is bad when in order to obtain pleasure for himself he is obliged to cause unpleasantness for others."⁷ Every person naturally serves his or her self-interest as defined by the relation between physiology and the external world. The bad in society results from a short-sighted and irrational view of one's own advantage.

Obtaining pleasure for oneself, and thereby for others, defines a moral person, and society can progress toward a utopian ideal by uniformly following the doctrine of rational egoism. "While everybody always wishes to act in a manner dictated by the most arrant selfishness,

⁵ Chernyshevsky, "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," in *N.G. Chernyshevsky: Selected Philosophical Essays*, 70, 92. Hereafter cited by title.

⁶ Ibid 119. According to physiology, Chernyshevsky went on, man does not differ from any other animal.

⁷ Ibid 99.

reason proves conclusively that self-interest is best served by the most selfless and altruistic conduct.”⁸ The whole of mankind gains from ideal rational self-interested actions, and a given action becomes less moral with each decrease in the number who benefit from it. This advantage [*vygoda*] is defined negatively: so long as an action does not promote pain, it is a moral action, although it could still be less moral than other actions if they promote greater or broader pleasure.

Society clearly did not function in this way. According to Chernyshevsky, this was the fault of all the philosophers who argued for the duality of man throughout history. His materialist convictions dictated that the entire world be understood physically; such a philosophy denies not only that the mind is a different sort of entity than the body, but also that any other "entity" (including a higher being than man, such as God) exists. Belief in duality blinds man to the power of laws discovered by natural sciences, creating an illusory view of reality and man's role in it.

Social, historical, and intellectual environment give rise to specific social problems. “The fact is that phenomena of all categories in various degrees of development exist among all nations. The embryo is the same among them all, it develops everywhere according to the same laws, but its environment is different in different places, and this explains the difference in development.”⁹ Each society must correct itself by fixing its particular environment in accordance to the unquestionable laws of rational thought and science. Fixing these problems is a long progression towards Chernyshevsky's ultimate goal, a rationally structured utopia.

Chernyshevsky's greatest literary endeavor (and one of the few that was published) shows the coherent nature of his social, moral, and political doctrine. He explicates his philosophy in

8 “Nikolay Chernyshevsky: A Russian Utopia,” 190.

9 “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy,” 110.

What Is to Be Done? so that its mandates for 'new people' seem impossible to deny. *What Is to Be Done?* serves a paradoxical dual role: it shows the way that life 'is' right now, since 'new people' already live in microcosmic utopias within Russian society; it also shows the way that society 'should' and will be once it embraces the doctrine of rational self-interest. Rufus Mathewson comments that "Though the 'is' in his novel is hidden under a heavy gloss of 'should be,' [Chernyshevsky] nevertheless insists on grounding his novel in the illusion of the contemporary and the everyday."¹⁰ *What Is to Be Done?* is quite literally the culmination of Chernyshevsky's philosophic thought, and the novel's text is Chernyshevsky's answer to its title, a longstanding question in Russian thought.¹¹

The 'woman question,' easily one of the most heated debates in the Russian intelligentsia following Alexander II's Emancipation Reform of 1861, provides the structure upon which Chernyshevsky constructs his novel. In fact, it seems that the censor allowed one of the most inflammatory novels in Russian history to escape from the confines of Peter and Paul Fortress to the hands of Nikolai Nekrasov, poet and editor of *Sovremennik*, because it appeared to be just another of the many novels investigating the 'woman question' at the time according to a superficial reading.¹² While Vera Pavlovna, the novel's female protagonist, is Chernyshevsky's radical response to the 'woman question,' the issue itself is only one part of the greater schemata of the work. To borrow Chernyshevsky's own analogy, the emancipation of women is a chapter in the book of his moral philosophy, just as physiology of man is a chapter in the book of chemistry, or as Russian history is only a chapter in the book of world history.¹³ One may view

10 Mathewson, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature* 75.

11 Others, such as Alexander Herzen in *Who Is to Blame?* and Ivan Goncharov in *Oblomov*, and to some extent even Alexander Pushkin in *Eugene Onegin*, imply and engage this question.

12 See Frank, *Through the Russian Prism*, pp. 188-89, for a brief history of the writing of *What Is to Be Done?* and the manuscript's journey from Peter and Paul Fortress to *Sovremennik*.

13 "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," 109, 104.

each of these subjects individually for convenience; however, they are only intelligible in light of the whole.

Chernyshevsky's characters constantly endeavor to develop themselves and society, to the extent they can exert influence on it. Vera Pavlovna, for example, constantly develops her thought, at first under Lopukhov's tutelage, but soon independently, only receiving affirmation of the correctness of her ideas, but not the ideas themselves, from him. She simultaneously develops her sewing cooperatives, perpetually moving closer to the goals of self-perfection and social utopia. Chernyshevsky describes all his characters' actions according to their rationality and rational goals; examples are found on almost every page. Rakhmetov, the 'extraordinary' revolutionary *bogatyr*, succinctly explains to Vera Pavlovna that he did not prevent Lopukhov's suicide because "his decision was well founded."¹⁴ With the exception of this suicide, which Chernyshevsky places at the front of his novel to engage the reader, the novel lacks conflict. Chernyshevsky's characters address the external circumstances of life with such calm rationality that their decisions seem indisputable.

Chernyshevsky suggests that man acts entirely in accordance with his physiological impulses – that is, in response to the external world. The narrator of *What Is to Be Done?* addresses Vera Pavlovna's mother, one of the many living under society's illusions: "You're now engaged in a bad business because your environment demands it; but if we were to provide you with a different environment, you'd gladly become harmless, even beneficial, because you don't want to do evil without financial reward, and if it were in your own interest, you'd do anything at all, you'd even act decently and nobly if necessary."¹⁵ Before his conversion to Chernyshevsky's philosophy, Lopukhov was not a new man; he lived in extreme poverty and drank heavily.

14 Chernyshevsky, *What Is to Be Done?*, trans. Michael Katz, 295. Hereafter cited by title.

15 Ibid 169.

Chernyshevsky curtly explains and justifies Lopukhov's vice by his situation: "But his drinking came about as a consequence of depression over his intolerable poverty – and nothing more."¹⁶ The omniscient and moralizing narration emphasizes the materialistic mindset shown in all the novel's protagonists.

Development, if it can be fully rationalized, will end all social problems. Chernyshevsky, himself the novel's very self-aware narrator, summarizes the inevitability of this progression to the reading public. "But years pass, and as they do, life gets continually better if it goes on as it should and as it does now among a very few. Someday it will be like that for everyone."¹⁷ The goal for Chernyshevsky and his 'new people' is the transformation of society into a utopia. Chernyshevsky details his version of utopia, a harmonious combination of the pastoral idyll, technological development, and the Biblical Promised Land, in Vera Pavlovna's Fourth Dream.¹⁸

Dostoevsky "sensed the importance of *What Is to Be Done?* immediately," and swiftly began to expose the problems of Chernyshevsky's views with *Notes from Underground* in 1864.¹⁹ Henceforth many of his works between 1864 and 1871, the period Joseph Frank refers to as "the miraculous years," integrate critique of Chernyshevsky's philosophy as an abstraction and as interpreted by society.²⁰ Tolstoy responded far less overtly to the radical intelligentsia's new ideas. Unlike Dostoevsky, he never met Chernyshevsky in person, although they did correspond via post and articles in literary journals including Chernyshevsky's *Sovremennik*.²¹ For much of the 1860s Tolstoy was busy writing *War and Peace*, but in 1863 he wrote the play *The Infected*

16 Ibid 93.

17 Ibid 202.

18 See *What Is to Be Done?*, pp. 359-379.

19 "Nikolay Chernyshevsky: A Russian Utopia," 188.

20 Frank, *The Miraculous Years: 1865-1871*, 68, 330, 425. Hereafter cited by title.

21 Boris Eikhenbaum, *Tolstoi in the Sixties*, 54; Eikhenbaum, *Tolstoi in the Seventies*, 20-21. Tolstoy did not frequent Saint Petersburg, nor did Chernyshevsky leave it for Moscow, explaining their lack of personal acquaintance; moreover, there seems to have existed a large divide between Moscow and Petersburg intellectual circles.

Family, and in 1866 began, but did not finish, a play called *The Nihilist*, both of which contain responses to Chernyshevsky's philosophy and allude to him fairly specifically.²²

We shall examine Dostoevsky and Tolstoy's oblique responses to Chernyshevsky in two of these authors' most famous and complex works: Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, published serially in *Russki Vestnik (Russian Messenger)* in 1866, and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, published between 1873 and 1877 in the same journal. In *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky quite clearly intended to warn the radicals and the reading public of the repercussions of Chernyshevsky's philosophy. *Anna Karenina*, viewed by many as a 'family' novel, also provides a subtle critique of radical ideas.

In "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy" Chernyshevsky compares the moral philosophies of human history to disease. "Owing to the same cause, however, i.e., inability to subject a thing to exact analysis, mistaken opinions arose in metaphysics and in the moral sciences which caused people much more harm than cholera, plague, and all infectious diseases."²³ Dostoevsky and Tolstoy reverse this metaphor in their works. The infectious plague of Chernyshevsky's radical philosophy that Dostoevsky warns of spreads throughout all levels of society during the seven years between the publication of *Crime and Punishment* in 1866 and the beginning of *Anna Karenina* in 1873, and by all indications will continue to spread. According to Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, something needs to be done. In the proceeding work, we shall examine Dostoevsky and Tolstoy's diagnoses of the radical disease, its effects on society, and their remedies for it.

22 Eikhenbaum, *Tolstoi in the Sixties*, 129, 131.

23 "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," 107.

Crime and Punishment: Radical Thought in Dostoevsky's Petersburg

*Ведь надобно же, чтобы всякому
человеку хоть куда-нибудь можно
было пойти.*

-Semyon Zakharych Marmeladov²⁴

Fyodor Dostoevsky initially imagined the work that became *Crime and Punishment* as a novella told from the perspective of a first person narrator. This narrator has committed a murder and reflects on the motivations of his crime in the form of a diary. This character became Raskolnikov in the novel, and for various reasons Dostoevsky shifted the narrator's perspective to an omniscient third person.²⁵

Raskolnikov is infected by the atmosphere of 1860s radicalism and the ideas of both Chernyshevsky and Pisarev, and Dostoevsky's primary critique of radicalism comes through Raskolnikov. His goal, however, was not to vilify or denounce the radicals. "Dostoevsky was rather striving to warn them against the calamitous results he could foresee flowing from the ideas by which they were now being inspired."²⁶ His contemporaries certainly acknowledged his critique of the radical intelligentsia. Nikolai Strakhov, one of Dostoevsky's fellow contributors to the journal *Vremya* [Time], commented: "This is not laughter at the young generation, reproaches and accusations but – a tearful lament over it."²⁷ Radicals recognized their role in the novel as well: G.Z. Eliseev, one of the radical writers for Chernyshevsky's journals *Sovremennik* and *Iskra*, "penned a bitterly hostile review of the first chapters of *Crime and Punishment*, accusing

24 Dostoevsky, *Prestupleniye i Nakazaniye*, in *PSS*, 6:15. In this section, citations from *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, will be given parenthetically in-text, and citations from Chernyshevsky, *What Is to be Done?* will be given in brackets.

25 Frank, "The Making of *Crime and Punishment*" 169. Hereafter "The Making of *Crime and Punishment*."

26 Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865-1871*, 60. Hereafter 'The Miraculous Years.' Furthermore, this pity for the radicals, leading to a literary warning rather than an attack, also characterizes Tolstoy's views on the radical intelligentsia and the portrayal of their ideas in *Anna Karenina*.

27 *The Miraculous Years* 60.

Dostoevsky of maliciously indicting the entire student population as murderers.”²⁸

To view Raskolnikov as the only character who engages the ideas of 1860s radicalism oversimplifies the novel. Using an approach that Mikhail Bakhtin in his *Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics* characterizes as “polyphonic,” Dostoevsky exposes readers of *Crime and Punishment* to a myriad of ideas through a range of secondary characters. Characters of various ages, social backgrounds, and levels of education embody the dangers of radical philosophy in different ways. The opaque atmosphere of 'new ideas' looms over Petersburg like its stifling summer heat and subtly subverts society. The novel evolves from a mere sketch of Raskolnikov into “a much more complex and brilliantly imaginative projection of the destructive and self-destructive possibilities embodied in the very latest version of the radical faith.”²⁹

As Dostoevsky presages in Raskolnikov's final dream, the influx of radical thought following the publication of *What Is to Be Done?* would have dire consequences not only for 'new people' infected with these ideas, but for all of Russia. By the mid-1860s these ideas were already having a profound influence on Petersburg society, and in *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky obliquely advertises their detrimental effects. Tolstoy would then continue to explore, in *Anna Karenina*, the ways radical thought had thoroughly permeated society by the 1870s.³⁰

Raskolnikov: Schism in the Russian Moral Code

The story of Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov is Dostoevsky's poignant cautionary tale of the consequences of 'new ideas.' Raskolnikov founds his belief system on Chernyshevsky's doctrine

28 Frank, Dostoevsky: *The Mantle of the Prophet*, 1871-1881, 228.

29 *The Miraculous Years* 60.

30 This atmosphere to some extent reflects the tension between 'is' and 'should be' in Chernyshevsky's thought. His ideas already impact society, and Dostoevsky reflects the 'is' of contemporary society. The 'should be,' however, becomes a warning: he shows not what society 'should be,' but what it *will* be if radical thought takes over Russia. By Tolstoy's time, the 'should be' or 'will be' has lessened in importance because of what Russia 'is.'

of rationalism and utilitarian 'advantage' as the moral standard for action; this doctrine provides the intellectual impetus for the murder of Alyona Ivanovna. Dostoevsky's moral law, however, comes from sources higher than mankind. This higher law finds expression throughout *Crime and Punishment* in Raskolnikov's physical illness and mental suffering. He suffers while deciding to commit murder, and even immediately after it feels "that he was perhaps not doing at all what he should have been doing" (80). Raskolnikov's ultimate failure to carry his plan to its "rational" conclusion after the murder does not result from any deficiency (in Chernyshevskian terms) in his strength of will, level of development, or rational consideration. The new moral code, Dostoevsky illustrates, cannot replace the old; it only provides false justification for radical goals.

Raskolnikov's utilitarian ideas set up a dichotomy between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' men that anticipate Nietzsche's 'Übermensch' and vividly engage Chernyshevsky's Rakhmetov. He decides that an 'extraordinary' man may transgress (*perestupit'*, literally "step over") traditional bounds of morality for the benefit of society. The very notion of 'transgression' (*perestupenie/prestupenie*) should only apply to selfishly-motivated crimes; moral law ceases to exist for those who can aid hundreds or even thousands of oppressed souls and create a better society.

Raskolnikov's ideas fall within the mainstream of radical Russian thought of the 1860s. The radical intelligentsia of the 1860s embraced Utilitarianism as a new moral code and held a steadfast belief in a glorious, utopian future for society. Pisarev enthusiastically endorsed Turgenev's Nihilist Bazarov in *Fathers in Sons* as an accurate and positive picture of the 1860s radical. "Thus Bazarov everywhere and in everything...does only what he wishes, or what seems to him useful and attractive...Neither over him, nor outside him, nor inside him, does he

recognize any regulator, any moral law, any principle...Nothing except personal taste prevents him from murdering and robbing, and nothing except personal taste stirs people of this stripe to make discoveries in the field of science and social existence.”³¹ Joseph Frank aptly sums up the radical influence on Raskolnikov: “the equation of murder and robbery with discoveries in the field of science and with significant social changes could not be closer to the theory developed in Raskolnikov's famous article *On Crime*; and one also finds in Pisarev's pages Raskolnikov's notorious distinction between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' people.”³²

Rationality empowers Raskolnikov and convinces him that he is different from the ordinary criminal, whose very "ordinariness" inevitably leads to his apprehension as a criminal. “The criminal himself,” thinks Raskolnikov, “experiences at the moment of the crime a sort of failure of will and reason, which, on the contrary, are replaced by a phenomenal, childish thoughtlessness, just at the moment when reason and prudence are most necessary.” As Joseph Frank points out, “Chernyshevsky had taught that morality was just a product of physiology.”³³ The morality and rationality of the “extraordinary” man make him unlike the common criminal. “In his personal case there would be no such morbid revolutions, that reason and will will remain with him;” because his action is “not a crime,” he won't have the physiological response of the “criminal” (71).

At the beginning of the novel Raskolnikov has already been mulling over radical ideas for at least six months – at least since writing and publishing his article “On Crime” – and his particular 'new idea' is not new to educated Russian society. He overhears a student and officer discussing new notions of crime and morality, and thinks to himself that “it was all the most common and ordinary youthful talk and thinking, he had heard it many times before” (66). This

31 Dmitri Pisarev, “Bazarov,” *PSS* vol. 4, 168. Translation in Frank, *The Miraculous Years*, 72.

32 “The Making of *Crime and Punishment*” 178.

33 *The Miraculous Years* 72.

overheard conversation helps Raskolnikov convince himself of his act's social benefit and prompts him to cultivate his 'germ' of an idea. His idyllic first dream, which recalls Napoleon in Egypt as well as Vera Pavlovna's Fourth Dream, appeals both to his ego and to the altruism Chernyshevsky claimed such egosim supported, and he decides to test his idea. "Why not go try it – enough of this dreaming!" (67, 70).

Raskolnikov never seems to develop a definite plan for bringing the supposed 'benefits' of his crime to the world, and he vacillates in his explanations for the act throughout the novel. The motivations he provides at the beginning of the novel become increasingly fragmented as he realizes that his supposed aspirations for a utopia future are only pretexts for desire to satisfy his ego and to escape poverty. Nonetheless, from a radical perspective the altruistic aspects of his plan seem to make sense. If one person must die for hundreds to live, it is correct for that person to die, even by another's hand.³⁴ Such a murder, in the radical order of things, would not incriminate Raskolnikov, but transform him into an 'extraordinary man.' Raskolnikov is thinking of Napoleon, but Dostoevsky is thinking of Rakhmetov—the vaunted progenitor of the bright future anticipated by radicals of the 1860s.

Regardless of the degrees to which these various ideas constitute Raskolnikov's true intentions before the murder, the underlying idea is Chernyshevskian rational self-interest. Insofar as he champions the necessity of social change, Raskolnikov believes that *he* should be its catalyst. His vision for social development results from the combination of his radical infection and egoistic desire to be not just 'new,' but 'extraordinary.'

Raskolnikov's preparations for the murder bespeak a materialist view of reality as

34 This is one of the less savory but rational consequences of Mill's "Greatest Happiness" principle. Raskolnikov in fact tries to achieve even greater utility in his choice of victim: he could choose any wealthy and morally bankrupt person to kill and would satisfy utilitarian demands. However, he chooses Alyona Ivanovna, who has no utility to the world at all other than her hoards of wealth.

inherently rational and causally determined. He plans the act 'rationally': he brings Alyona Ivanovna a pledge in order to inspect the future scene of the crime, decides upon the murder instrument, where to get it, how to transport it to the scene, an appropriate diversion, and so on. Raskolnikov, in short, thinks that he can plan every detail of the murder, every contingency. "The preparations, incidentally, were not many," yet "He strained all his energies to figure everything out and not forget anything" (68). He even considers such minutiae as the number of steps between his room and Alyona Ivanovna's flat.

This sort of rational planning certainly characterized Chernyshevsky's thought. He long aspired, though never succeeded, to create a single mathematical equation by which one could universally apply rational-utilitarian laws to every aspect of life.³⁵ Chernyshevsky also cataloged every aspect of his own quotidian life, meticulously observing, calculating, and rationalizing in his diaries, notes, and letters. He, like Raskolnikov, fastidiously counted steps between locations, even calculating the day's mileage in a given mode of transportation and time spent in transit.³⁶ Dostoevsky certainly could have been aware of this because of mutual acquaintances or simple gossip, so Raskolnikov's 'rational' calculations may be an oblique reference to Chernyshevsky's habits.³⁷ If on the other hand this particular similarity is merely coincidental, then it turns out that Dostoevsky had a brilliant understanding of the workings of the rational mind à la Chernyshevsky.³⁸

Raskolnikov makes several errors in the course of the murder that by sheer luck do not lead to his apprehension. Dostoevsky explains in a letter to Katkov: "he [Raskolnikov] manages

35 See Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism*, for comprehensive analysis of Chernyshevsky's habits and their connections to his philosophy.

36 Paperno 44-6. Incidentally, both Nikolai Dobrolyubov and Lev Tolstoy kept similar diaries (although without the graphic detail of Chernyshevsky's).

37 The two men actually met in 1859 – see *Diary of a Writer*, vol. 2, 23-30.

38 At other times both before and after the murder Raskolnikov wanders about utterly unaware of his location, surroundings, or destination. This inconsistency will be addressed later on.

in an absolutely accidental way to accomplish his undertaking both quickly and successfully.”³⁹

In other words, his rational plan fails at almost every turn. His original plan for obtaining the murder weapon fails, yet he manages to take the axe from the caretaker's shop. He is not even sure at which point he can stop bludgeoning the pawnbroker's dead body and steals trinkets, leaving behind hundreds of rubles without realizing it and failing to execute the part of the plan that was most important to his altruistic aspirations: Razumikhin inadvertently rubs this truth in when he comments that the murderer “couldn't even rob, all he could do was kill!” (150).

Raskolnikov even escapes only by chance. And despite the 'determined' whereabouts of Lizaveta Ivanovna, she returns, 'forcing' Raskolnikov to murder her.

Even by the most tenuous of rational calculations, Lizaveta Ivanovna did not deserve to die. She by all indications lived productively and without malice towards others. In Dostoevsky's first drafts she is also pregnant — a detail that sharpens Dostoevsky's critique of utilitarianism as brutally callous toward individual human life.⁴⁰ The only way for Raskolnikov to justify her murder in utilitarian terms is through sheer egoism: he considers his potential benefit for society more valuable than her life. Even this justification, of course, is weak, but again displays the tension between egoism and altruism.⁴¹

Raskolnikov perceives his act as metaphysically determined by the rational structure of the external world; this again echoes Chernyshevsky's teachings on the “materialistic” nature of the world. He hears the conversation in the tavern about new ideas immediately after overhearing a conversation in the Haymarket, to whence he wanders for no consciously 'rational' or advantageous reason. “He could in no way understand or explain to himself why he...returned

39 Dostoevsky, *Letters: Volume II, 1861-1867*, trans. David Lowe, 174-75.

40 *The Miraculous Years* 82.

41 For this argument to work, Raskolnikov must believe in determinism; his benefice for society *will be*, giving it more utility than Lizaveta Ivanovna's life. If he only speculates on his future value, the rational calculus becomes far more complicated.

home through the Haymarket, where he had no need at all to go. The detour was not a long one, but it was obvious and totally unnecessary" (60). From this conversation he gains knowledge that determines the time and place of the murder, and "even if he had waited years on end for a good opportunity, having his design in mind, he could not have counted with certainty on a more obvious step towards the success of this design than the one that had suddenly presented itself now" (62).

Determinism convinces Raskolnikov of the moral rectitude of his plan; he feels "as if someone had taken him by the hand and pulled him along irresistibly, blindly, with unnatural force, without objections" (70). Even before going to the tavern, "he suddenly felt with his whole being that he no longer had any freedom either of mind or of will, and that everything had been suddenly and finally decided."⁴² Free will gives way to absolute determinism; he feels "as if a piece of his clothing had been caught in the cogs of a machine and he were being dragged into it" (70). None of the events of that day are matters of blind chance in Raskolnikov's perception, but rather exhibit the rational structure of the causally determined world and his role in it.

Dostoevsky juxtaposes Raskolnikov's determinism with the inherent irrationality of the murder, showing the danger of a person feeling, correctly or not, that he is devoid of free will. The feelings of determination that Raskolnikov experiences, as though he was being forced into the murder, rob him of his ability to make moral choices. Whether something 'determines' his action or not, the important thing for Dostoevsky is that Raskolnikov *feels* compelled. This loss of a belief in free will begets an oppressive and potentially dangerous sense of powerlessness; man needs to believe that he has some control over his actions in order to live morally. When robbed of that feeling, he subordinates himself to what he considers the rational structure of

⁴² Dostoevsky 62. It is worth noting that the original, "все вдруг решено окончательно", perhaps even more clearly shows Raskolnikov's feelings of powerlessness and compulsion. (Dostoevsky, *Polnoe Sobraniye Sochinenii*, 6:52)

reality.

This perceived rational structure begins to disintegrate almost immediately after the murder, and Raskolnikov subconsciously attempts to reinforce it with the illusions of his tortured mind. Events in his dreams 'cause' events in reality; he can no longer discriminate between the external world and the realities created by his mind. Learning that a particular event did not take place in reality helps break down Raskolnikov's sense of determinism. Throughout this period he tries to hold to his rational-utilitarian principles: at times he claims that he has not transgressed, at others he even claims that the murder absolves other sins. Finally, however, through Sonya's influence, he comes to realize that he has done something terribly wrong and recognizes the ultimate egoism of his actions. Dostoevsky wrote to Katkov, "Compelled, so as to become linked to people again, even at the price of perishing at penal servitude; that feeling of separation and alienation from humanity that came over him immediately after committing the crime has worn him out with torment. The laws of justice and human nature have come into their own, inner persuasion even without resistance. The criminal himself decides to accept suffering in order to expiate his deed."⁴³ The "criminal," having suffered greatly to see the error of his 'new ideas,' must now suffer to pay penance to all mankind.

Raskolnikov's rational justifications only work within Chernyshevsky's radical philosophy, which places man's rationality above all else. Combined with a materialist perspective, rationalism raises its own logic to the status of godhead without consideration of such issues as inherent value in human life. Rationality allows humans to view the world in the manner most advantageous to themselves. In Part VI, Raskolnikov begins to understand that rationalism often does not describe reality so much as it shapes and distorts it. "Give me your evidence and I can distort it to seem innocent." He explains the possibilities for manipulation of

43 Lowe 175.

fact afforded by rationalism to Sonya: “they don't have any real evidence...All their evidence is double-ended; I mean I can turn their accusations in my own favor” (421). Rational explanation, in Dostoevsky's view, is not synonymous with truth; it all too easily conforms to egoist aims. Chernyshevsky's moral arbiter, rationality and rational knowledge of the world, is a false idol.

Raskolnikov's squirreling away of what he did manage to steal is the ultimate failure of both aspects of his theory. He does not use the money, and therefore does not improve his own impoverished situation in the slightest, much less become 'extraordinary.' Because the money literally sits under a rock, it does society no good either. At the same time, the remaining material wealth of the “useless” pawnbroker go, according to her will, to a monastery, a symbol of faith clearly inimical to Raskolnikov's rationalism.

Dostoevsky presents the reverse of the developmental ascent to 'new' or 'extraordinary' that creates Chernyshevsky's utopia. Raskolnikov begins with utopian hopes founded on the doctrine of egoism, and fully experiences their failure. After the murder he comes to realize that he is not a Napoleon (or a Rakhmetov), but clings to his radical theories despite his trans-rational sense that what he did was wrong. Chernyshevsky perhaps would say that Raskolnikov had not adequately tempered his will for such an undertaking; Raskolnikov at times justifies himself in such a manner. His theory, he thinks, has not failed; the 'empiric' test of it failed because of he had not 'developed' enough to step over the boundary between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary.'

Dostoevsky rejects this conception of the will and its power to overstep moral law. Raskolnikov comes to understand through suffering that there exists a law that is higher than rational self-interest and the new interpretations of morality; it is only after accepting his sin and suffering the pain of atonement in Siberia that he can truly achieve redemption and salvation. He finally understands that “instead of dialectics, there was life, and something completely different had to

work itself out in his consciousness" (550). His trans-rational understanding of "life" finally cures Raskolnikov of the infection of radical moral philosophy, and the suffering that this realization requires helps to absolve his sin.

Razumikhin: Redefining the *Bogatyr*

Dmitri Prokofych Razumikhin in many ways appears to be an oblique response to Rakhmetov, Chernyshevsky's 'extraordinary man.' Dostoevsky had Rakhmetov in mind while sketching Razumikhin's character; at one point in his notes he even wrote 'Rakhmetov' instead of 'Razumikhin.'⁴⁴ While the similar sound of their surnames creates a surface echo between the two characters, their similarities extend much deeper. Dostoevsky subtly recalls Rakhmetov by placing Razumikhin in situations reminiscent of *What is to be Done?*. In these scenes Razumikhin exhibits a natural connection between his strong will, rational ability, and his heartfelt concern for mankind; however he is devoid of any arrogant impulse to order the world 'rationally.'⁴⁵

Joseph Frank comments, "Dostoevsky's mistake [in naming Razumikhin as Rakhmetov in his notes] reveals his obvious desire to create a nonrevolutionary counterpart to Chernyshevsky's *bogatyr*."⁴⁶ Both characters emphasize development of physical strength as well as strength of will. "[Razumikhin] could be violent on occasion, and was reputed to be a very strong man."

(51). Rakhmetov aspired "To become and remain Nikitushka Lomov," the *bogatyr* hero of

44 *The Notebooks for Crime and Punishment* 96. It is also worth mention that the context of this slip of the pen does not overtly pertain to Chernyshevsky or the Rakhmetov character in *What Is to Be Done?*

45 It is important for us to briefly sketch Razumikhin's social and educational background. He is a "former student" at the Petersburg University, fluent in three languages, and, like both Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky at the beginning of their literary careers, translates foreign works for publication. He calls himself a "gentleman's son" [*dvoryanskii syn*], but it seems that his provincial family was fairly impoverished (as many families of the nobility were at the time), and embodies many of the key traits of the 1860s *raznochintets* (Dostoevsky was of poor noble background and Chernyshevsky was a *raznochintets*). However, his beliefs are not radical: he categorically dismisses, for example, socialism and Fourier's *phalanstère*, both important aspects of Chernyshevsky's philosophy.

46 *The Miraculous Years* 99.

Russian folklore renowned for his great strength, and succeeded to the extent that “people started calling him Nikitushka or Lomov, or by the full form, Nikitushka Lomov” [281, 278] Rakhmetov also “maintained a Spartan way of life. For example, he wouldn't allow himself a straw mattress; he slept on a strip of felt, not even folding it double.” In addition to this quotidian regimen, he once slept on a bed of nails in order to increase his tolerance for pain.⁴⁷ While Razumikhin never imposes quite that level of torment upon himself, “he could make his lodgings even on a rooftop, suffer hellish hunger and extreme cold...Once he went a whole winter without heating his room” (51). Others perceive these strong wills: at the novel's end “Dunya believed blindly that he would carry out all his intentions, and could not but believe it: an iron will could be seen in the man” (540); as for Rakhmetov, “It was not by his birthright [he renounced his noble birth] but by sheer strength of will that he'd acquired the right to bear a name so renowned among millions of people” [278].

Rakhmetov's extreme practices “are necessary” for the revolution that Chernyshevsky ostentatiously forecast for 1865. Katz and Wagner suggest that Rakhmetov also may temper his will and body in preparation for the harsh imprisonment that many *intelligentsy*, including Dostoevsky and Chernyshevsky, suffered.⁴⁸ Razumikhin denies Chernyshevsky's revolutionary goals explicitly, but still uses many of the qualities idealized in Rakhmetov to help others with true altruism and no thought of self-interest.

Dostoevsky refutes Chernyshevsky's theory of socioeconomic determinism through Razumikhin in quite subtle terms. “He was very poor, and supported himself decidedly on his own, alone, getting money by work of one sort or another” (51). Economic deprivation does not lead Razumikhin to crime, and he is still “an exceptionally cheerful and sociable fellow” who is

⁴⁷ Chernyshevsky 281. That Rakhmetov sleeps on a bed of nails is widely known; many critics neglect the fact that he approaches this feat of will with full rational control over it. See Chernyshevsky, 288-89.

⁴⁸ Chernyshevsky 288.

loved by all.⁴⁹ In the face of poverty and deprivation, "Razumikhin was also remarkable in that no setbacks ever confounded him, and no bad circumstances seemed able to crush him" (51). His will overcomes circumstances that Chernyshevsky claims should damn him to avarice, criminality, and abjection.

In *What is to be Done?* Kirsanov attends day and night to the ill Lopukhov. Vera Pavlovna correctly supposes that Kirsanov's vigil is perfunctory (he sleeps more than he attends to his patient), but she places great faith in him because he is rationally certain of Liuchow's recovery (which, of course, happens precisely as predicted). Razumikhin appears in a similar situation: finding Raskolnikov ill, Razumikhin cares for him out of spontaneous and natural love for a friend and fellow member of humankind (despite that friend's hostility). He does everything within his power for Raskolnikov, even calling in Zossimov, a doctor, but he is not rationally "certain" that Raskolnikov will recover simply because a doctor he holds in high esteem is present. Kirsanov stays with Lopukhov as a rationalized means for putting Vera Pavlovna at ease; Razumikhin watches over Raskolnikov out of genuine concern for him and despite his doubts about the severity of Raskolnikov's condition. He cares, in short, without rational necessity and without relying on reason to make authoritative claims about what will happen.

Razumikhin's natural and pure love for Raskolnikov runs far deeper than caring for him when he is sick. When Raskolnikov first visits, Razumikhin immediately recognizes Raskolnikov's destitution: "It's that bad, is it? You've even outdone me, brother,' he added, looking at Raskolnikov's rags" (111). Razumikhin clearly acknowledges that Raskolnikov's situation is worse than even his poor one, and therefore offers him work doing translations from German to earn a little money, and even he gives him a share of money he had already accepted

⁴⁹ Dostoevsky 51. As noted above, Rakhmetov is of noble and wealthy birth, which he renounces for the life of a "gloomy monster" serving Chernyshevsky's utopian cause. His way of life is rationally structured, precluding any suffering that may come from Spartan 'environment.'

for the translations. Razumikhin feigns rational and egoistic justification for his altruism. “And one more thing, please don't regard this as some sort of favor on my part. On the contrary, the moment you walked in, I already saw how you were going to be of use to me. First of all, my spelling is poor, and second, my German just goes kaput sometimes.”⁵⁰ However, Raskolnikov recognizes Razumikhin's self-interest as a facade, recalling that “though [Razumikhin] had told Raskolnikov six days ago that his German was 'kaput,' with the aim of convincing him to take half of his translation work and three rubles of the advance; not only was he lying then, but Raskolnikov had known that he was lying” (311). It would be more to Razumikhin's advantage (or rational self-interest) to tell Raskolnikov honestly that he was barely subsisting on what little money he had, especially since he clearly does not need Raskolnikov's help. He shows true altruism despite his poverty.

Razumikhin compassionately extends care to the agitated Raskolnikov women as well. He invents a comprehensive plan to simultaneously attend to all the Raskolnikovs. This intervention is welcome, ostensibly, to all but the recalcitrant Raskolnikov; even Nastasya, whom Raskolnikov consistently abuses verbally, follows Razumikhin's orders, so powerful is his heartfelt compassion for the mental and physical well-being of others. Throughout the ordeal Razumikhin imposes his will and rationality on the situation, but does not 'calculate.' He simply acts rapidly and decisively, and the thought of self-interest never creeps into his mind.

Razumikhin provides the Raskolnikovs with an accurate and fair synopsis of Raskolnikov's condition: that Raskolnikov is “magnanimous and kind,” but also “sullen, gloomy, arrogant, proud” (215). His analysis is rational, grounded in his own experience with

50 Dostoevsky 112, italics added; original: «Ты мне будешь полезен» (PSS 6:95). Additionally, Razumikhin calls himself «швах», a word from the German 'schwach,' which indicates one's weakness in a given matter. The word very rarely appears in Russian, and Dostoevsky's use of it serves as an indication of Razumikhin's knowledge of the German language. Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, cited above, is far from literal, but maintains this lingual subtlety.

Raskolnikov, and not tailored to fit the Raskolnikovs' idealized image of their 'Rodka.' Rather, this report to the Raskolnikovs on 'Rodka's' condition "managed to convey the most important and necessary facts from the last year of Rodion Romanovich's life, concluding with a detailed account of his illness," yet "he omitted much of what was better omitted, including the scene in the office with all its consequences."⁵¹ Given Razumikhin's incomplete understanding of his reclusive friend, Razumikhin does not commit a sin of omission. He creates an insightful portrait of his friend without attempting to rationalize what he does not understand. His words stand in stark contrast to Rakhmetov's frigid pronouncement to Vera Pavlovna: "I must inform you that the general outcome of my visit will be consoling" [295].

Razumikhin also serves as the liberator of an oppressed woman in profoundly un-Chernyshevskian terms. Having read Luzhin's slanderous letter, Razumikhin replies "calmly and at once" that they should "do as Avdotya Romanovna has decided" (219). He rationally decides that the best solution is the most egalitarian, recognizing Dunya's intelligence and independence. He could easily impose his will on this situation, as he did in caring for Raskolnikov, but he instead defers to Dunya.

Razumikhin, along with Raskolnikov, intuitively recognizes Luzhin's thinly-veiled intentions, corroborated for the reader by Luzhin's inner monologues. Razumikhin rationally "liberates" Avdotya Romanovna from Luzhin, just as Lopukhov liberates Vera Pavlovna from engagement to Mikhail Streshnikov. But despite this surface similarity, the two liberations and subsequent marriages have very different motivations. Lopukhov and Vera Pavlovna's marriage is devoid of true passion, but is 'moral' because it saves Vera Pavlovna from the torture of her family situation.⁵² Razumikhin saves Avdotya Romanovna from Luzhin, who egoistically and

51 Dostoevsky 214. It is certainly significant that these particular adjectives are the omniscient narrator's.

52 Razumikhin also briefly raises the idea of giving Avdotya Romanovna lessons as a mean to win her heart (209).

speciously claims he is "emancipating" her through his proposal of marriage. Dunya's and Razumikhin's marriage, as described in the Epilogue, involves both genuine love (which the marriages in *What Is to Be Done?* lack) and the kind of utopian happiness and egalitarianism envisioned by Chernyshevsky.

Like his literary and real-world contemporaries, Razumikhin uses and values his rational capacities. Unlike them, he has no pretensions about rationality's ability to bring utopian order to the world. "And if you like I can deduce for you right now...that you have white eyelashes solely because Ivan the Great is two hundred and fifty feet high, and I can deduce it clearly, precisely, progressively, and even with a liberal tinge. I can!" (257). Razumikhin criticizes perspectives based solely on rationality: "...you know what irks me the most about [the police's rationalization of the facts]? Not that they're lying; lying can always be forgiven; lying is a fine thing, because it leads to the truth. No, what irks me is that they worship their own lies." (135) Razumikhin's understanding of the radicals' abuse of rationality in explaining the world fully expresses Dostoevsky's skeptical view of the radical intelligentsia: in deifying 'reason' and 'self-interest,' they arrogantly put forth a view of human nature that makes everything in the world explicable by rationality.⁵³

Razumikhin experiences crucial moments of sudden and spontaneous clarity that are in sharp juxtaposition with his general hesitancy to rely on reason. When he intuitively realizes Raskolnikov's guilt in Alcon Ivanovna's murder, "something strange seemed to pass between [Raskolnikov and Razumikhin]...as if the hint of some idea, something horrible, hideous, flitted

The tradition of the tutor-female student or tutor-female sibling of a student relationship that leads to marriage was already well established in Russian literature. Examples of these relations appear in Alexander Herzen's novel *Who is to Blame?* (1847). In *What is To Be Done?*, instruction provides Lopukhov with the opportunity to meet and encourage the development of Vera Pavlovna. This idea also factored prominently into Chernyshevsky's relations with women in his own life.

53 Moments of satori or sudden understanding, described throughout this work as "trans-rational," do not even occur in *What Is to Be Done?*; nor, in light of Chernyshevsky's view of the external world and his literary aesthetic, should they.

by and was suddenly understood on both sides... ”⁵⁴ Raskolnikov speaks the scene's only words: “You understand now?”, and the narrator describes the trans-rational sensations Razumikhin experiences. Even though he attempts to rationalize the experience with the idea of 'political conspiracy,' he ultimately understands the fallacy of trying to use rational knowledge to explain trans-rational understanding, and relinquishes his mistaken opinion of Raskolnikov, which derives solely from his desire not to accept Raskolnikov's guilt. After this moment of trans-rational understanding Razumikhin returns to the Raskolnikovs and consoles them, explaining Raskolnikov's sudden escape by his illness. Razumikhin does not understand the full implications of this explanation: Raskolnikov certainly is physically sick, but his actions, of course, result far more from his radical 'infection.'

At first Razumikhin does not understand the love he feels for Avdotya Romanovna. It is certainly different from the agape love he feels for all mankind. The spontaneous, natural, and perhaps inherently trans-rational feeling of romantic love manifests itself in irrational desires, which confound his more rational impulses. He fails to understand what he is feeling until Raskolnikov eventually explains love, inexplicable to the rational mind, to him. Once he understands that he loves Dunya, he does not try to enforce his understanding with rationality or 'personal interest,' but again acts decisively and in accordance with his will and desire.

Razumikhin steadfastly loves Raskolnikov despite his crime. At Raskolnikov's trial, “Razumikhin dug up information somewhere and presented proofs [*predstavil dokazatel'stvo*] that the criminal, Raskolnikov, while at the university, had used his last resources to help a poor and consumptive fellow student, and had practically supported him for half a year...All this information had a certain favorable influence on the deciding of Raskolnikov's fate” (536).

⁵⁴ Dostoevsky 314. The Russian impersonal construction emphasizes the spontaneity of this moment far more than the English: “что-то ужасное, безобразное и вдруг понятное с обеих сторон» (Dostoevsky, *PSS*, 6:214).

Razumikhin also expresses love verbally: throughout the novel, Razumikhin refers to his friend most frequently not as 'Raskolnikov' or 'Rodion Romanovich' (or some permutation thereof), but by the far more familiar and tender nicknames 'Rodya' or 'Rodka.' At their final meeting, Razumikhin calls Raskolnikov by his full first name, Rodion, but also calls him 'brother.' While Razumikhin clearly has great love for Raskolnikov, he is more a 'brother' to Raskolnikov in the sense of altruistic care and compassion for humanity rather than particular closeness to Raskolnikov.⁵⁵

Joseph Frank notes that Razumikhin's name (with the root *razum*, 'reason') "indicates Dostoevsky's desire to link the employment of this faculty not only with the cold calculations of Utilitarianism but also with spontaneous human warmth and generosity."⁵⁶ Razumikhin uses rationality and his strong and even 'developed' will to act in the world. He has the humility and understanding to avoid the mistakes of the radical intelligentsia: he does not arrogantly impose rational order on the world, and he naturally couples reason with altruism and care for humanity rather than self-interest.

Luzhin and the Spread of the Plague of Radicalism

Pyotr Petrovich Luzhin, whose surname etymologically originates in the word '*luzha*,' puddle, absorbs and subsequently muddies the radical mindset and goals.⁵⁷ He advocates egoism and self-interest, and connects these ideas, as Chernyshevsky did in *The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy*, to the benefits of progress, empiric science, and economic law as replacements for 'old-fashioned' mores such as Christian morality and brotherly love. Dostoevsky uses Luzhin to

55 In comparison, the general way that Raskolnikov names people, like the way that he speaks with them, indicates his tenuous relationship toward others. For example, he only calls Razumikhin by his surname throughout the novel, signifying his resistance to the ideas represented in Razumikhin.

56 *The Miraculous Years* 99.

57 Dostoevsky may also sardonically emphasize the social detriment of Chernyshevsky's philosophy through an allusion to Christ's first disciples with Luzhin's first name and patronymic, Pyotr Petrovich. Christ renamed his disciple Simon as Peter, the rock upon which his church will be built (Mt. 16:17-18).

show the ease with which society can appropriate and abuse radical ideas, thereby transforming into the dystopian society of Raskolnikov's final dream. Through Luzhin, one of the first bearers of the radical 'infection,' Dostoevsky foretells the bilious effect of these ideas on society.

Pulcherina Raskolnikova introduces Luzhin to Raskolnikov in a letter as a man with "the convictions of our newest generation" (35). However, he has no conviction; he merely 'shares' (*razdelyaet*) the views popular with Raskolnikov's generation. Even in this guarded introduction, Luzhin appears as a man who is not truly progressive-thinking, but who knows how to take advantage of what is new and popular.⁵⁸ "He had heard, as everyone had, that there existed, especially in Petersburg, certain progressives, nihilists, exposers, and so on and so forth, but, like many others, he exaggerated and distorted the meaning and significance of these names to the point of absurdity" (363). Luzhin is not a caricature of the new radical *intelligent*, but shares the convictions of the younger generation "out of fear of their influence rather than from any genuine sympathy."⁵⁹

Frank notes that "One understands why the radicals resented seeing their ideas placed in the mouth of so unsavory a character as Luzhin; but Dostoevsky accurately captures their reliance on Utilitarian egoism, their aversion to private charity (as demeaning to the receiver), and their rejection of the Christian morality of love and self-sacrifice."⁶⁰ Luzhin does not just pretend to share the beliefs of the new generation; he has truly subsumed them. "He already knew how to round off certain phrases he had borrowed somewhere;" he uses these phrases to garner favor with the young and radical generation, in his encounters being Raskolnikov,

58 Pyotr Petrovich recalls both Stepan Trofimovich Verkhnovensky of *Devils* and Pavel Petrovich Kirsanov of *Fathers and Sons*. Like both these men, Luzhin attempts to purport himself as liberal, but still reeks of wealth and falsity; it is notable that the subject of money comes up in almost every scene he appears in. In this way, he may be a caricature of the 'men of the 40s' who tried to keep pace with new ideas.

59 *The Miraculous Years* 118.

60 *Ibid* 118.

Razumikhin and Lebezyatnikov, and the socially or politically powerful (364). Luzhin uses new ideas to project a liberal and enlightened image in society and to his own personal advantage.

Pyotr Petrovich lays out his new principles in order to curry favor with Raskolnikov and Razumikhin. He first conveniently misinterprets the Christian notion of *agape* towards others: “If up to now, for example, I have been told to 'love my neighbor,' and I did love him, what came of it?”⁶¹ Luzhin then attacks this brotherly 'sharing,' which is entirely unlike his own. “What came of it was that I tore my caftan in two, shared it with my neighbor, and we were both left half naked.” He concludes with the answer of 'science,' which coincides exactly with Chernyshevsky's own response. “Love yourself before all, because everything in the world is based on self-interest. If you love only yourself, you will set your affairs up properly, and your caftan will also remain in one piece. And economic truth adds that the more properly arranged personal affairs, and, so to speak, whole caftans there are in society, the firmer its foundations are and the better arranged its common cause. It follows that by acquiring for everyone, as it were, and working so that my neighbor will have something more than a torn caftan, not from private, isolated generosities, but as a result of universal prosperity” (148-49).

Raskolnikov engages in 'private, isolated generosities' during his occasional spontaneous moments of sympathy for humanity's desperate condition. Luzhin emphasizes the need to reconstruct society entirely, but he appropriates the benefits of these ideas without a real belief in that reconstruction; his whole caftan is far more important than the half-caftans of society. As Tolstoy subtly shows in *Anna Karenina*, society usurps these new ideas without taking into account their detrimental effects. In both novels radical ideas infect society; Luzhin shows the egoistic reasons for why the infection spreads so easily and epidemically.

61 Luzhin refers to either Matthew 5:40 or Luke 6:29, which read, respectively: “And if any man will sue thee at law, and take thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” “And unto him that smiteth thee on the cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.” (King James Version)

Luzhin summarizes contemporary intellectual thought, claiming that “something has been done: useful new ideas have spread, and some useful new books, instead of the former dreary and romantic ones...In short, we have cut ourselves off irrevocably from the past, and that in itself, I think, is already something, sir...”⁶² The allusion to new ideas and books certainly recalls Chernyshevsky; destruction of the old closely follows Pisarev's nihilist philosophy and the mentality of Bazarov in Turgenev's *Father and Sons*.

The similarity to Pisarev and Turgenev's hero appears strongly in early drafts of Luzhin's speech. Luzhin (in this draft named Cembalo) tells Raskolnikov: “‘*Tant que* I've put my affairs in good order, I am useful to others, and therefore, the more I am an egoist, the better it is for others...It's simply a matter of arithmetic. No, you know, I like the realists of the new generation, the shoemaker and Pushkin; and although I do not agree with them in part, still the general tendency...’(7:151). This last, unfinished sentence unmistakably refers to Pisarev, who had launched the slogan of “Realism” as a social doctrine in 1864 and, following Bazarov, had resoundingly declared a shoemaker to be more useful than Pushkin.”⁶³ The allusion is not present in the final text, although Dostoevsky satirizes Bazarov's nihilist notion of social value in Luzhin and in Lebezyatnikov's discussion of whether it is more noble to serve society as a cesspit cleaner or as “some Raphael or Pushkin” (371). Lebezyatnikov advocates the option more “useful for mankind,” since usefulness is the true moral standard. Luzhin, however, disagrees for purely egoistic reasons: “This 'cesspit question,' in spite of its triviality, had served several times before as a pretext for quarrels...Luzhin was just letting off steam, and at the present moment wanted especially to anger Lebezyatnikov” (372). Luzhin's philosophic

62 Dostoevsky 148. Raskolnikov replies 'All by rote! Recommending himself!', immediately showing his response to the very Utilitarianism that he attempted to use himself as well as the general sterility of Luzhin's mindset. On the other hand, “That is all quite correct,’ Zossimov hastened to put in,” for the second time corroborating Luzhin's position and showing that the plague has already spread to others.

63 *The Miraculous Years* 88; Turgenev, *Fathers and Children*, trans. Michael Katz, 158.

convictions are fully malleable because of his glorified rational self-interest. He gains more from antagonism of Lebezyatnikov than agreement, and therefore antagonizes rather than even attempting to honestly discuss the issue.

Luzhin reverses Chernyshevsky's answer to the 'woman question,' deciding to marry for various self-interested reasons. He only then attempts to find his ideal bride: "a well-behaved and poor girl (she must be poor), very young, very pretty, well born and educated, very intimidated, who had experienced a great many misfortunes and was utterly cowed before him, a girl who all her life would regard him as her salvation, stand in awe of him, obey him, wonder at him and at him alone" (307). He believes Dunya fits his ideal, but does not reckon on her strong will. When their relationship falls apart, Luzhin blames himself for failure to subordinate her and her mother. Dostoevsky caricatures Chernyshevsky's obsession with finding the ideal woman in Luzhin's ideas, while showing the incompatibility of rational self-interest and altruism.⁶⁴ He also satirizes the very notion of the ideal: after the split with Dunya, Luzhin "even took comfort for a moment, feeling quite sure of finding a bride for himself somewhere in another place, and perhaps even a cut above this one" (361).

Luzhin reverses Chernyshevsky's notion of 'bending the stick back to make it straight.'⁶⁵ Equality in a marriage matters no more to him than the caftans of others. Rather, his thoughts display rationally self-interested desire for exaltation of his ego: in marriage he can simultaneously show his magnanimity to the world, since he is marrying beneath his perceived status, and in 'saving' his bride forever oblige her to him, thus giving her an unequal and

⁶⁴ Paperno notes that Chernyshevsky compared the potential object of his affection with other women, an abstract notion of "faultless beauty," accepted standards of beauty in visual art, in determining if she is an ideal beauty. He performed a similar appraisal of the woman's personality and the possibility of pursuit of and marriage to her (64-65, 72-75).

⁶⁵ Women have so long been subordinate to men, Chernyshevsky's reasoning goes, that a man must give his wife higher status than his own; mere equality does not alleviate their former suffering. (Paperno 111)

subordinate position. He wants to marry a woman who is 'ideal' for every self-interested reason, but none of the egalitarian ones.

Neither does Luzhin have any sympathy for the 'fallen woman'. He has opportunity (and financial means) to aid the 'fallen woman' (if only by profession) Sonya, and her family. The impoverishment and dreadful condition of the Marmeladovs is no secret to Luzhin. He could use his means to greatly ameliorate their situation, but instead abuses and exploits them under the guise of philanthropy and pity. Giving Sonya money initially appears altruistic and good even to Lebezyatnikov, who claims to oppose 'private charity,' but Luzhin uses this trick to shame Sonya and discredit Raskolnikov with the ultimate goal of revenge against Raskolnikov and reclamation of Dunya's hand. The trick relies on flaunting material wealth and slander, ploys that Luzhin has at his immediate disposal. Christian love for mankind, which Dostoevsky so highly valued, falls to pieces in Luzhin's version of the radical doctrine. Raskolnikov compassionately helps Marmeladov and his family even when he has nothing to give; Luzhin vainly uses the Marmeladovs to prove his superiority. Dostoevsky does not disagree with Chernyshevsky's belief that selfishness is a natural and human quality; however, he shows its malevolence if deified.

All Luzhin's endeavors in Petersburg fail miserably. However, he only admits to two mistakes, both of which he thinks he could have avoided. "It was also a mistake not to give [the Raskolnikovs] any money...Devil take it, why did I turn into such a Jew? There wasn't even any calculation in it!" (363). Failure results from insufficient instantiation of the radical idea of rational calculation of advantage. Luzhin's mindset mocks Chernyshevsky's notion of 'development:' he thinks his plans would have worked out had his infection developed further.⁶⁶ Seeing the world only through the cold lens of rational self-interest, Luzhin is blind to the true

66 It is also fairly natural to think, from this (and possibly any human) rationalization of past events, that unpleasantrness could have been avoided by better rationalization.

nature of life and relations with others.

Luzhin's only other mistake, to his thinking, lies in his dismissal of society in pursuit of Dunya. "Your mother seems to have entirely forgotten that I decided to take you, so to speak, after a town rumor concerning your good name had spread throughout the neighborhood. Disregarding public opinion for your sake, and restoring your good name, I could quite, quite certainly hope for some retribution, and even demand your gratitude...I see myself that I perhaps acted quite, quite rashly in disregarding the public voice" (305-6). Luzhin admits a lack of rational calculation while emphasizing personal advantage and the value of public opinion.⁶⁷

Luzhin takes from radical philosophy and the progressive climate what he can for his own gain; anything not directly beneficial to him has no meaning. He rationalizes a method by which he seems kind-hearted, magnanimous and progressive in the eyes of society. Yet his mind and actions are dominated by egoism. Furthermore, he is more than an example of the selfishness inherent in human nature. Through him Dostoevsky shows the failure of the radical intelligentsia to resolve the paradox of living with both altruistic ideas of progress and social change and rational egoism. And even if Chernyshevsky and the rest of the radical intelligentsia would beg to differ (perhaps claiming that Dostoevsky presents a deliberate bastardization of their ideas in Luzhin), Dostoevsky if nothing else shows how easily their philosophy can lead to real abuse.

Dostoevsky equates the spread of radical philosophy with an infectious plague. It is through characters like Luzhin that the infection begins to spread from its ardently convicted radical origins to a society willing to contract it for its own advantage. Tolstoy will take up this

67 Public opinion is an important issue in *Anna Karenina* as well. While it underlies much of the novel, it is a topic of particular importance in the novel's conclusion. It is also worth noting in passing that J.S. Mill considered public opinion a generally correct moral indicator. While Chernyshevsky and the rest of the radical intelligentsia begged to differ, they agreed in principle; the problem lies in the mindset of society. Once society is sufficiently restructured it can rely almost solely on public opinion, since that opinion will always be rationally calculated to the greatest advantage.

very idea in *Anna Karenina*, albeit covertly. The infectious plague is of epidemic proportions, and many in society contract it unknowingly. With its spread new laws and goals become codified while eradicating the divine law that both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy find crucial to life. Luzhin, far from being a Raphael or Pushkin, is the stagnant water in which the germs of radical ideas fester, soon to infect all of Dostoevsky's city on a swamp, and thence all of Russia.

Subtle Critique of Radical Ideas in the 'Family' Novel: *Anna Karenina*

*Повинитесь, сударь. Что делать! Люби
капаться...*
– Matryona Filimonovna⁶⁸

At the beginning of the 1870s Tolstoy began writing a historical novel in the mold of *War and Peace*, but set in the time of Peter the Great. Tolstoy found himself unable to write on this theme, because the age “is too remote from us, and I found that it was difficult for me to penetrate the souls of people of that time, so unlike us are they.”⁶⁹

The failed Peter the Great project ultimately inspired the famous first line (“All was in confusion in the Oblonskys' house”) of Tolstoy's next literary endeavor, a family novel with a contemporary setting.⁷⁰ Eikhenbaum notes that “the ideological tonality of both concepts is one and the same: Tolstoi had to find 'the knot of life' in order to solve the problem of human conduct.”⁷¹ The novel grew quickly from its beginnings as the story of adultery in the Karenin and Oblinsky households to a story engaging broader social themes, and Tolstoy added Levin's plot arc to better address these strands in the “knot” of contemporary life. Afanasy Fet, poet and friend of Tolstoy, commented that “Levin's name could have been included in the title, as he was no less important for the novel than Anna.”⁷²

Anna Karenina also resulted from Tolstoy's intense engagement with various burning social and philosophical questions of the 1860-70s; these questions in a sense “cement together all of the various materials used in the structure.”⁷³ Eikhenbaum claims that no other work in nineteenth century world literature “combined so many things as seemingly uncombinable as an

68 Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, in *PSS*, vol. 18:5.

69 Eikhenbaum, *Tolstoi in the Seventies*, 95. Hereafter cited by title.

70 Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, 1. Henceforth all citations from *Anna Karenina* will be given parenthetically.

71 Tolstoy 1, *Tolstoi in the Seventies* 95.

72 Stenbock-Fermor, *The Architecture of Anna Karenina*, 63.

73 Ibid 64.

internal story of a passion and topical problems of social life, of manorial economy, of science, philosophy, and art.”⁷⁴ One theme that Eikhenbaum does not explicate is modernity itself, symbolized by the railroad. For many, including Vissarion Belinsky, the preeminent literary critic of the 1840s, the railroad was a ray of hope and a sign of progress.⁷⁵ For Tolstoy, however, it symbolized the evils of modern society.

Many of these evils developed from the work of Belinsky's heir in literary criticism and philosophic thought, Chernyshevsky. Tolstoy was well aware of Chernyshevsky's influence, and he initially intended to address radical ideas very directly in *Anna Karenina*.⁷⁶ His indictment of the radicals was far more overt in early drafts and sketches: his primary target was Chernyshevsky and what he broadly called 'Nihilism.' In the novel's final version this indictment of radicalism is a subtext, overshadowed by the magnitude of his other social critiques.

Tolstoy therefore did not attack the radicals head on, as he had in several works of the previous decade, including *The Nihilist* and *The Infected Family*. In the latter short play Tolstoy showed the ease with which the most fundamental social unit, the nuclear family, could become infected and subverted. At that time, the 1860s, the radical intelligentsia presented a real threat against Dostoevsky and Tolstoy's conceptions of morality and life itself, and they aspired to inoculate society against the 'new ideas' spawned in the radical camps.

Tolstoy diagnoses the infection of 'new ideas' – that is, Chernyshevsky and the radicals' ideas of the 1860s – on a broad social level. Many of Dostoevsky's works of the 1860s clearly portray radicalism and its effects in Saint Petersburg and foretell the impending spread of the epidemic.⁷⁷ By 1873 this has come to pass: Tolstoy shows the extent of the epidemic's spread

74 *Tolstoi in the Seventies*, 111.

75 Stenbock-Fermor 66.

76 *Tolstoi in the Seventies*, 104.

Dostoevsky set many of his works in Saint Petersburg in the 1860s, and he often connects the city to radical

from Saint Petersburg to Moscow and even to the Russian countryside.

Levin recapitulates the covert influence the radical 'new ideas' have on Russian society: "the majority of people of his age and circle, who had replaced their former beliefs, as he had, did not see anything wrong with it and were perfectly happy and content" (786). Society is blind to the true effects of the radical infection; new ideas in the natural sciences (including medicine, biology, and physiology) and moral philosophy allow society to ignore deeper, pre-existing moral issues. Levin eventually recognizes the symptoms of the disease and cures himself of it; Anna does not, and her radical infection in a sense enables her progression to suicide. The radical illness also works subtly in the minds of the 'two Alexeis,' that is, Alexei Vronsky and Alexei Karenin.

Like Dostoevsky in *Crime and Punishment*, Tolstoy engages, but does not directly attack, the radicals and their ideas. Stenbock-Fermor comments that "we sense who has Tolstoy's sympathy, but there is no definite condemnation of those he considers to be on the wrong path; rather there is irony and pity."⁷⁸ The radical infection seduces society and heads to false ways of living and thinking. Tolstoy laments this situation while reminding society of the ways it can live honestly, peacefully, and harmoniously.

The Two Alexeis: Restructuring Life to Escape Life

Anna's dream in Part II of *Anna Karenina* of being married to both Vronsky and Karenin reflects Tolstoy's ironic take on Chernyshevsky's idea of a 'triple union,' a reactive resolution to tenuous marital situations and proactive means of creating ideal marital relations.⁷⁹ The dream also

ideas. However, in his 1872 novel *Devils* he makes a similar point about the spread of radical thought to the provinces of Russia, although Petersburg still plays a role.

78 Stenbock-Fermor 109.

79 Chernyshevsky developed the 'triple union,' an idea connected with a third party as 'mediator' in marriage, in part from the literature of George Sand, who played a large role in his thinking as well as that of other progressive and radical *intelligentsia* (see Paperno, 136-141).

implies the similarity of the two Alexeis: while outwardly very different, they have both been subtly infected by the radical philosophy of the 1860s. Karenin and Vronsky embrace Chernyshevskian ideals of a rationally structured life and environment, but neither character is ultimately able to achieve this ideal in their private or public lives. They instead simply use rational thinking to cover over the moral implications of their actions, achieving neither harmony nor peace with Anna or with life itself.

Karenin's rationalism permeates his life. As a government official, Karenin advocates an empirically based reorganization of life in the case of racial minorities. He reflects a Chernyshevskian desire to reduce all questions to empiric and material variables, and Tolstoy mimics and subtly mocks Karenin's style of rational thought.⁸⁰ His hyper-rational approach to his son's schooling recalls Lopukhov's approach to teaching and learning. He applies this method indiscriminately, even for studying Orthodox Christianity: in memorizing countless religious rules, stories, and lessons, Seryozha acquires knowledge, but no real faith.⁸¹ Levin tells his brother-in-law Arseny Lvov that certain grammatical rules must be memorized, not understood; Karenin debases religious faith to the same level. Karenin's thinking evokes Chernyshevsky's penchant for cold calculation and enumeration. Anna aptly describes Karenin on several occasions as a "machine."

Karenin has unknowingly embraced radical utilitarian thinking even in issues of the heart. His words to Anna upon her return from Moscow indicate the schism between true emotion and

80 A surprisingly similar situation to the 'case of racial minorities' fell under Chernyshevsky's consideration. In "The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy," Chernyshevsky criticizes J.S. Mill's "conservative" position on extension of the franchise to minorities, but praises the cause of his hesitation: "...Mill published a pamphlet, and also a letter, in which he explained that before rights are granted to people of a particular class, an exact scientific investigation ought to be made of the mental, moral, and political qualities of the people of that class" (*Selected Essays*, 58)

81 Tolstoy 518. Seryozha also has a tutor for his secular education. While detail about Seryozha's tutor is sparse, it seems that he may in fact be more radical than Karenin realizes. He disdains social conventions, and his brief physical description perhaps mocks the typical radical Petersburg student.

cold rationality. He is not, of course, actually “burning with desire to see her”; he even says the words with “a tone in mockery of someone who might actually mean what he said” (104).

Rationality lends the Karenins’ married life the illusion of harmony. The two exist lifelessly on parallel tracks until the marriage is derailed by Anna’s infidelity — that is, by the exigencies of life itself.

Tolstoy uses the Karenin marriage to probe the question of “family happiness” and the nature of marriage as an institution. The radical intelligentsia appropriated and redefined the traditional notion of an arranged marriage. Paperno comments that “among the new men, the calculated marriage seems to have been accepted as normal.”⁸² Karenin mimics the radicals, and the resulting marriage is cold, calculated, and falsely harmonious.⁸³ He claims to love Anna, but reduces love, like his bureaucratic affairs, to rationally fulfilling duty. The loveless nature of the Karenin marriage predisposes Anna to infidelity —though it should be noted that for Tolstoy this infidelity was by no means inevitable, and could have been avoided if Anna were guided by a deeper moral sense; Tolstoy in no sense subscribes to Chernyshevsky’s idea of environment as determining crime.

Vronsky also meticulously and rationally arranges his affairs. The narrator describes him as “a man who hated disorder,” and Vronsky assiduously “squares accounts” or “does his laundry” (*faire la lessive*) in order “to keep his affairs in order at all times”: he first deals with his monetary affairs according to a strict code of ethics, and then moves on to social and military issues, deciding all issues with complete rationality (302). A Chernyshevskian ‘rational calculus,’

82 Paperno 108-9, 282. Paperno cites Chernyshevsky’s rational planning of every stage of courtship of and marriage to Olga Sokratovna, and continues to describe Pisarev’s attempts, from imprisonment in Peter and Paul Fortress, to rationally convince a woman named Lidia Osipovna of the rational reasons why they should wed. Ironically, she refused.

83 Traditional marriage, of course, often involved matchmakers. However, Karenin undergoes the matchmaking process by himself, that is, without a *svakha*, and in a rational way that recalls Chernyshevsky’s personal diaries far more than Russian tradition.

although Vronsky doesn't name it as such, defines his approach to quotidian life.

Karenin and Vronsky approach their relations with Anna with the same empiric and rational mindset. As with Raskolnikov, their rationalism results in a crippling sense of determinism in the face of emotion. Also like Raskolnikov, they circumvent dealing on a deeper emotional level with moral questions; their tragedy is that they, unlike Raskolnikov, never fully understand the flaws in their actions and thinking.

Vronsky is determined and deterministic from the moment he first meets Anna. He unabashedly tells her how they ended up on the same train: "You know I am going in order to be where you are...I cannot do otherwise" (103). Vronsky feels 'determined' in the metaphysical sense to pursue Anna. Upon arriving in Saint Petersburg and coming face to face with her husband, he decides that Anna "does not and cannot love him," and that he alone has the "unquestionable right to love her."⁸⁴ He knows he must exert this right, but "What would come of it all, he did not know and did not even consider. He felt that all his hitherto dissipated and dispersed forces were gathered and directed with terrible energy towards one blissful goal" (105). This same kind of feeling compels Raskolnikov to test his Napoleonic idea.

Karenin confronts Anna about her relations with Vronsky when he feels "illogical and senseless" jealousy (142). He tries to use reason despite knowing that his feelings are irrational, even providing four enumerated points by which he can prove the danger of Anna's actions to her. Karenin's 'love' — that is, duty — compels him to act, but he articulates rational arguments instead of emotion. His rational words fall on deaf ears in part because he cannot address life itself. "Alexei Alexandrovich saw [no change in Anna and Vronsky's actions] but could do nothing" (148). Instead of confronting emotion, Karenin chooses to ignore what is happening

⁸⁴ Tolstoy 106. Chernyshevsky felt a similar sense of determinism in his desire to marry Olga Sokratovna Vasilevna. Several entries in his diary bear titles such as "Why Olga Sokratovna Is My Bride" (Paperno 107).

around him.

Initially, Karenin tells himself that he has “not only no proofs...but even no suspicions” that he has been cuckolded, and refuses to acknowledge the truth of his intuitive understanding or admit his unhappiness (202). Seeing Anna's reaction to Vronsky's injury at the races, he finally allows himself to know what he already understood: that she has deceived him. Nonetheless, this “most cold and reasonable man” still must rationalize his understanding of what is going on: “I always knew it, and always saw it, though I tried to deceive myself out of pity for her” (278-29). Attempting back to get back onto the plotted tracks of his former life, Karenin rationalizes emotion and approaches the situation in terms of rational self-interest. “The only thing that concerned him now was the question of how to shake off in the best, most decent, *most convenient for him, and therefore most just* way, the mud she had spattered on him in her fall, and to continue on his path of active, honest and useful life” (279, italics added). He abandons concern for Anna's fate and his earlier commitment to preserving their connected life.

Karenin carefully considers challenging Vronsky to a duel, but rejects the idea on rational grounds.⁸⁵ While he may 'rationally' want to avoid situations in which he could meaninglessly lose his own life, he also uses 'reason' to conceal his fear of a duel. He then considers and rejects divorce and separation: neither option guarantees his happiness, but would allow for Anna and Vronsky's, while also compromising his social position and undermining his self-interest. “There remained one feeling with regard to [Anna] – an unwillingness that she be united with Vronsky unhindered, that her crime be profitable [*vygodno*] to her.”⁸⁶ 'Profitability' or 'advantage'

85 Tolstoy 280. The similarly hyper-rational Chernyshevsky attempted to consider as many variables as possible in his consideration of any given issue as well. This trait is apparent from the description of Karenin's thought process.

86 Tolstoy 281. '*Vygodno*' or '*vygoda*' appears numerous times in Chernyshevsky's “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy,” and Dostoevsky poignantly combats its role in human decision making in *Notes from the Underground*.

dominates Chernyshevsky's criteria for morality, but Karenin makes use of it to promote his self-interest, which he defines in part as rejection of altruism. He then decides that there is no rational reason for him to be unhappy, and thereby ignores the true nature of his situation and emotions.

This tenuous situation leads Karenin and Vronsky to structure their meetings with Anna so as to avoid one another. This 'rational' means of preserving harmony, however, creates a situation "painful for all three of them," which they accept because they think it will change (353). It soon does: Anna, knowing her husband's regimented schedule, implores Vronsky to come to see her at home, something Karenin had explicitly forbid. She and Vronsky assume that Karenin's rational nature allows them to use their own reason to safely circumvent his wishes. Like Raskolnikov before the murder, they think they have found an ideally opportune moment to act, but Tolstoy uses Karenin's deviation from his rational schedule and the resulting collision with Vronsky to show that rationality cannot impose order upon reality.

The disruption of meeting Vronsky jolts life off its tracks, and Karenin shows a rare outburst of emotion. However, he soon returns to "reason," and learns the legal side of the process of divorce through a lawyer, reversing his earlier decision based on a new rational argument for his happiness. He thinks that this new argument will give him peace, and rejects Dolly's pleas for him to forgive Anna, saying to himself "'the matter's settled, there's no point in thinking about it'" (409).

Karenin clearly sees Anna and Vronsky's suffering when Anna appears to be dying during childbirth. Their suffering, and the probability that Anna will soon die, seems to lead to some sort of genuine change of heart, or rather, use of the heart rather than the mind; he even somewhat compassionately allows Vronsky to remain at Anna's bedside. This change is instantaneous and deeply emotional, rather than rational: "I forgave her completely...I only pray to God that He not

take me from the happiness of forgiveness!” (414). Karenin's initial impulse to forgive seems genuine, but he still ends up treating forgiveness like a bureaucratic document: it creates a particular effect that then becomes a steadfast part of life's order. His “forgiveness” causes him to reverse his decision to divorce Anna, and he tries to fulfill his only remaining obligation to her: “that he leave his wife alone and not bother her with his presence” (505).

This solution works briefly, but the emotional and moral complexity of the situation seems to frighten him. “The most difficult thing in that situation was that he simply could not connect and reconcile his past with what there was now” (505). Rather than changing his approach to life at this moment of crisis, Karenin redoubles his efforts to rationalize those aspects of life he can control, taking a still more proactive role in the bureaucracy and his son's religious education. All these efforts, however, merely conceal his struggle against emotion. Like Raskolnikov, Alexei Alexandrovich deliberately separates himself from others, and seems constitutionally unable to discuss his thoughts and feelings with anyone. Even Lydia Ivanovna immediately silences him, claiming to understand his emotions already.

Karenin appears to become an ardent believer in the popular version of mystic Christianity sponsored by Lydia Ivanovna. But Karenin's newly found faith, unlike Levin's at the novel's conclusion, ultimately rests on rational thought patterns. “Since he possessed the fullest faith, of the measure of which he himself was the judge, there was no sin in his soul and he already experienced full salvation here on earth” (511). In Karenin's new way of thinking, the individual, not God, is the natural arbiter of the human soul. Through 'Christian' faith Karenin convinces himself of the evil of the external world, receives further justification for his own rationally constructed righteousness, and declares his sublime happiness. It seems to him that his heart has changed, but he tells Stiva that he “thought the matter [that is, divorce] was ended. And

I considered it ended" (723). His religious 'conversion,' in other words, simply furthers his rational needs.

Karenin disappears from the narrative after this conversation, but Vronsky's mother mentions him in Part VIII in conversation with Koznyshev. By this point, after Anna's suicide, he has apparently agreed to adopt Annie. More significantly, however, the Countess comments, "For him, the husband, it's easier after all. She set him free" by committing suicide (778). It would seem that Karenin's methods of escaping true emotion and blame for Anna's infidelity and fate ultimately succeed, but he fails to live honestly. Karenin 'cures' his suffering with a combination of rationality and false faith, a remedy no less toxic than Anna's morphine.

Vronsky and Anna attempt to structure life in a rational way in order to attain a kind of utopian happiness. Their various arrangements work temporarily, but inevitably 'real life' reasserts itself, and one or both of them become dissatisfied. They establish a pattern of blaming their environment for their lack of happiness and simply moving on to a new one. This pattern begins when they go abroad after Anna leaves Karenin's household, eventually settling in Italy.⁸⁷ In Italy it appears that life is arranged such that there could be no unhappiness. Anna feels fully liberated, but Vronsky "soon felt that the realization of his desire had given him only a grain of the mountain of happiness he had expected" (465).

The problem lies in the utilitarian habit of simplistically defining happiness by a black and white dichotomy between pleasure and pain. Vera Pavlovna does not lack desire: she wants to increase the success of her workshops, to steadily progress towards some kind of utopian ideal. Greater happiness results from progression towards an ideal; it accumulates as the individual develops. Vronsky never truly reevaluates this problematic notion of happiness.

⁸⁷ The continental tour was common for upper-class Russian newlyweds of the time. Ironically, while Anna and Vronsky mimic a married couple, Levin and Kitty forgo the European tour, and move to Levin's estate immediately after the wedding.

Instead, he attempts to divert himself with painting and other such more pleasurable activities.

New activity, of course, only temporarily distracts Vronsky, and he and Anna return to Petersburg for various reasons. After a cataclysmic quarrel, they decide that the cause of their intense suffering is the social environment of Petersburg, which (unlike Vronsky) has not embraced “progress,” and they soon move to Vronsky's country estate, where Vronsky devotes himself to rational farm management.⁸⁸ It is at Vozdvizhenskoe that they most adamantly try to structure life to provide happiness.⁸⁹

When Dolly comes to visit Anna at Vronsky's estate, she inwardly compares the life there with life on Levin's estate (where she has just been), and the comparisons she makes are not flattering for Anna and Vronsky. She is immediately uncomfortable because everything, from the livery to the nursery, is of inconceivably high quality. Unlike Levin, Vronsky also invests his time and money in a hospital for the peasants and uses the latest agricultural techniques and machinery. Anna comments, “It had all run to seed, but Alexei has renovated everything. He loves this estate very much, and, something I never expected, he's passionately interested in managing it...He's not only not bored, but he takes it up passionately” (614). Development superficially seems to better life at Vozdvizhenskoe, as do frivolous amusements and equally frivolous acquaintances. Despite her initial impressions, Dolly senses the triviality of their pursuits and the deep unhappiness of life at Vozdvizhenskoe.

Vronsky comes closer to understanding the true nature of his situation and suffering in one of his few conversations with Dolly. He sees Anna's happiness, and claims to be happy himself, but recognizes that he needs to stay constantly busy to distract himself (627). He seems

88 This is not to say that environment does not play a role; clearly society's reactions to Vronsky and Anna provoke suffering in and of themselves. Their mistake lies in placing full blame on society and believing that they will be perfectly happy in a different locale.

89 The name 'Vozdvizhenskoe' roughly translates as 'place of moving upwards,' and evokes such indicative words as 'vozdvigat', to erect or to build up. The place's name indicates Vronsky and Anna's actions there.

to believe that restructuring the estate, together with involvement in the noble assembly (the *zemstvo*), give his life meaning. “I work here, staying put, and I’m happy, content, and we need nothing more for happiness...*Cela n'est pas un pis-aller* [This is not making the best of a bad thing], on the contrary...”⁹⁰ Dolly realizes that “once he had begun talking about his innermost attitudes, which he could not talk about with Anna, he would now say everything, and that the question of his activity on the estate belonged to the same compartment of innermost thoughts as the question of his relations with Anna” (627). That Vronsky can speak freely with Dolly (whom he really only knows through Stiva) indicates the intensifying schism between him and Anna. Dolly, unlike Vronsky, understands from this conversation that the unhappiness she senses at Vozdvizhenskoe reflects the nature of Anna and Vronsky’s relationship itself, and her own life as a harried mother and ignored wife regains meaning because of this understanding.

Disillusionment once again sets in, and Vronsky decides to take part in the *zemstvo* elections, partially out of his belief in the importance of “progress,” but also to escape from Anna and life at Vozdvizhenskoe.⁹¹ Anna also begins to suffer more acutely, and they soon require another change of scenery. They move for the last time, this time to Moscow, where life proves no better than elsewhere. In fact, they lose any harmony they once had, and create their own ultimate perdition by individually rationalizing the situation instead of honestly talking to one another. Dolly has already realized that “the irritation that divided them had no external cause” (739); Anna and Vronsky never do. The cause of their discord, Tolstoy implies, is internal to their

90 Tolstoy 627. Tolstoy himself also devoted considerable time to the questions that occupy Vronsky at this point vis-à-vis construction of medical, educational, and generally philanthropic institutions in the country, and the intelligentsia discussed the issue of such institutions as well. Levin also investigates these questions, and comes to drastically different conclusions, while Koznyshev fully supports Vronsky’s new social awareness and attacks his half-brother’s views on the subject. See Eichenbaum, *Tolstoy in the Seventies*.

91 Activity, if nothing else, characterizes Chernyshevsky’s characters and the radical intelligentsia in general. Mikhail Bakunin gained a reputation for his constant hurry. In literature, the radicals of Dostoevsky’s *Devils*, particularly Pyotr Stepanovich Verkhnovensky, also displays this trait. In revolutionary and Soviet Realist works such as Maxim Gorky’s *Mother*, Nikolai Ostrovsky’s *How the Steel was Tempered* and Valentin Kataev’s *Time, Forward!*, activity even becomes idealized.

situation; it develops directly from the choices they have made and from the radical infection that convinces them that they needn't confront the moral and existential implications of these choices. The ways they have tried to deal with these issues are fundamentally not able to mitigate their suffering.

The terminal nature of Vronsky's 'infection' is clear in his decision to fight, or rather to die, in the Serbo-Turkish War. Vronsky, along with others suffering his ailment, believe it is their moral obligation to help their fellow Slavs, yet the 'common cause' is not Vronsky's only motivation. He tells Koznyshev that "nothing in life is pleasant to me," and his rejection of Koznyshev's offer to write letters of recommendation to the Serbian revolutionaries indicates his true intention to die in combat and end his earthly suffering.

Vronsky is not a Byronic hero à la Lermontov's Pechorin; his literal death wish mixes romanticism with utilitarianism. He does not make another suicide attempt after Anna's death; he now wants to die a *useful* death. "As a man," said Vronsky, 'I'm good in that *life has no value for me*. And I have enough physical energy to hack my way into a square and either crush it or go down – that I know. I'm glad there's something for which I can give my life, which is not so much needless as hateful to me. *It will be useful to somebody...* Yes, as a tool I may prove good for something" (780, italics added). Vronsky rationally and romantically decides to serve others while fulfilling his desire for self-annihilation.

Vronsky expects that his rationally self-interested action will kill him and at the same time provide society with a modicum of utility. Chernyshevsky, Pisarev, and their fellow radicals thought similarly: so convinced were they of their correctness that they expressed their readiness to die for their agendas.⁹² In 1869, Sergei Nekes and Mikhail Bakunin codified this readiness in

⁹² Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, 210; Grigoryan, Introduction to *N.G. Chernyshevsky: Selected Philosophical Essays*, 45.

Catechism of a Revolutionary.⁹³ Vronsky's self-annihilation reflects the nihilist agenda: he has been infected from the start, and the infection leads him to a welcome, rational death.

Anna Karenina, Suffering, and the Push of Radical Infection

One of Tolstoy's characteristically brief and vague sketches for *Anna Karenina* implies that his oblique critique of radical ideas was embedded in his conception of the novel's eponymous heroine. "Anna among the nihilists," Tolstoy writes without further detail.⁹⁴ Tolstoy saw an opportunity to respond to the radical intelligentsia in his 'family novel,' and uses the figure of Anna to show, as Dostoevsky does with many of his characters, the consequences of the 'infection' afflicting the radical intelligentsia. This infection may not lead to her infidelity, but it prevents her from probing the consequences of her actions on a deeper level and propels her not toward some kind of utopian happiness, but toward unhappiness and ultimately death.

Before involving herself with Vronsky, Anna is a blameless and appealing character.⁹⁵ During and after her fall, however, she affects a deliberate break from her traditional and calm life, however 'tracked' it may be, and the radical infection spreads quite literally through her body and mind. She abandons what conventional religious convictions she may have held up until then, and conscientiously goes against her heart in leaving Countess Lydia Ivanovna's "virtuous and pious" social circle for the circle of the morally loose Betsy Tverskoy (127). Anna, like Stiva, acknowledges the falsity of Lydia Ivanovna's Christian way of life ("her goal is virtue,

93 Bakunin and Nechayev, *Catechism of a Revolutionary*, in Michael Confine, ed., *Daughter of a Revolutionary: Natalie Herzen and the Bakunin-Nechayev Circle*, 221-30. They unequivocally state that one can sacrifice his or her own life or that of a comrade for the cause based on rational calculus of the situation: "When a comrade gets into trouble, the revolutionary...must balance, on the one hand, the usefulness of the comrade, and on the other, the amount of revolutionary energy that would necessarily be expended on his deliverance, and must settle for whichever is the weightier consideration." (227). One could easily consider Vronsky both the revolutionary and the comrade because of the self-interested judgment at the end of his life. Of course, he is in fact going to liberate Serbian revolutionaries from their Turkish oppressors.

94 Paperno 154. See also Eikhenbaum, *Tolstoi in the Seventies*, and N.K. Gudai, "Istoria Pisaniya i pechataniya 'Anni Kareninoi,'" in Tolstoy, *PSS*, 20:577-643, for more on Tolstoy's desire to include "nihilism" in the novel.

95 This was one of the largest changes to the structure of *Anna Karenina* that Tolstoy included: his original conception of Anna was as a fat woman, repulsive in every sense of the word; while still in the planning stages, Tolstoy modified her character to embody opposite qualities, at least in the opening chapters.

she's a Christian, yet she's angry all the time" [108]); yet even if Anna's own 'Christianity' was questionable (in some ways it seems very similar to Karenin's empty faith), the combination of faith and her generally pious social circle kept her on the straight and narrow until meeting Vronsky.

As mentioned earlier, Anna dreams of a marriage with the 'two Alexeis' in Part II, Chapter XI. The dream clearly implies love and sexual relations with both men: they "lavish caresses" on her, saying, "It's so good now!" (150). Chernyshevsky staunchly advocated the presence of a third party in marriage, partially in the role of a 'mediator,' but also to fulfill the woman's sexual needs (his 'triple unions' always involve one woman and two men). ⁹⁶ Paperno writes that "Chernyshevsky left his wife free to give her heart and body to another and even explicitly encouraged her to do so."⁹⁷ She also suggests that Anna's dream specifically alludes to *What Is to Be Done?*, and points out that Tolstoy considered *What Is to Be Done?* to be "a nihilist solution to the problem of adultery and the love triangle."⁹⁸ Even if Tolstoy did not intend to allude specifically to Chernyshevsky's novel with the dream, it still intimates that Anna is familiar with the idea of such a "solution" in society. Which of these explanations is more compelling is, frankly, beside the point: if Anna has read Chernyshevsky, then she actively absorbs radical ideas; if she has not, then the dream only further connotes the breadth and extent to which Chernyshevsky's ideas have spread in society by the 1870s.

Anna turns to other rational solutions once she realizes that she cannot achieve this 'triple union.' She summarily dismisses Christian religion, "though she had never doubted," because she knows the answer that religion will give her: that her situation is immoral, that she must repent and return to Karenin (288). Life with Vronsky constitutes the new meaning of her life, and since

96 Paperno 117-119, 136.

97 Ibid 136.

98 Ibid 154.

she knows that she cannot harmonize this life with her old standards of morality, she finds new standards. Her mind combats her soul's implicit understanding that that what she does is wrong. A new moral code is replacing the old: it is precisely at this moment that she feels that "that everything was beginning to go double in her soul" (288).

In the novel's opening scenes Anna speaks with Dolly about Stiva's affair with the governess with candor that surprises Dolly. Now self-interest becomes a stronger part of her thinking and subtly subverts her sense of morality. For Anna lying was "foreign to her nature," but it "had not only become simple and natural in society, but even gave her pleasure" (295). Her notion of morality has changed, and radical utilitarian ideas convince her that she has the right to lie for her own sake. If she must lie to achieve the pleasure of seeing Vronsky, then she can rationally construe lying as moral; it is an outward expression of her subtle embrace of the doctrine of 'self-interest.'⁹⁹

Chernyshevsky's characters also lie to themselves, but they to some extent realize their self-deception and attempt to discover the cause. Kirsanov provides the best example of this phenomenon: when he cannot act on his love for Vera Pavlovna, he becomes hostile towards her and Lopukhov, eventually submerging himself in medical research to hide his feeling. Presenting himself as hostile seems to him the most rational thing to do, because he does not want to betray his feeling to Vera Pavlovna or Lopukhov; however, in order to withdraw, he must invent other activities to excuse his absence.¹⁰⁰ Anna similarly invents excuses for herself, but does so in order to satisfy her personal interest in seeing Vronsky without trying to understand why she must hide her actions.

Anna clearly implies to Dolly that she is using medical science, in the form of some new

⁹⁹ It is worth reiterating Pisarev's belief that the nihilist can commit any crime, provided it is "useful" and according to his or her temperament. Anna follows this same logic.

¹⁰⁰ *What Is to Be Done?* 234.

contraceptive technique, to avoid pregnancy. She and Vronsky certainly have not stopped having sex, yet Vronsky seems utterly unaware of Anna's decision not to have more children: during this same visit he expresses his desire for offspring who will bear the Vronsky name, and makes it clear to Dolly that he thinks it is inevitable that Anna will bear more children (627). So Anna is consciously deceiving him. Despite her implicit dismissal of both traditional morality and the necessity of honest relations with him, Anna seems to be acting with both her own self-interest and a certain odd kind of altruism in mind; she is trying, in effect, to have the best of both worlds. She avoids pain while achieving pleasure, and 'altruistically' uses the reason given to her "so as not to bring unfortunate children into the world?" (638). Dolly, serving as Tolstoy's moral compass in the scene, feels that Anna's solution is a "much too simple solution of a much too complicated question," and instinctively senses that the solution is immoral and avoids the true issue (637).

Anna's use during childbirth of another great advance of nineteenth-century medical science—morphine—seems logical in and of itself. The birth of Annie almost kills her, and the doctor administers morphine to her so that she can cope with the physical pain, which is certainly the correct thing to do from a scientific standpoint.¹⁰¹ But following childbirth, Anna develops a physical and psychological addiction to the drug, using it to dull the pain of her existential (rather than physical) problems. Anna wonders why she did not die from the complications of her birth, not realizing that the science that kept her alive is a part of the rational disease slowly pushing her to death.

Thoughts of Karenin and her situation upset and even torment her, and she tells Dolly "When I think of it, I can't fall asleep without morphine" (640). She attempts to have a calm

101 Levin's disapproval of morphine when he encounters it suggest Tolstoy also viewed this advance in modern medicine skeptically. Chernyshevsky, on the other hand, fully endorsed all medical advancements and elimination of suffering, suggesting that he would approve of the use of morphine.

conversation with Dolly about divorce, but the conversation quickly ends when Anna decides that Dolly is incapable of understanding her arguments, “such strong ones that it was impossible to answer them.” Anna denies Dolly’s almost verbatim repetition of Anna’s words at the novel’s beginning, “I only see that you look at things too darkly,” saying, “Me? Not a bit. I’m very cheerful and content,” but eventually admits that this is also an illusion: “I look at things too darkly. You cannot understand. It’s too terrible. I try not to look at all” (640). Morphine and keeping constantly busy (most obviously by reading modern books that advocate or corroborate various radical ideas) allow Anna to avoid looking at life.¹⁰²

This plan grandly fails in Moscow, where she begins to recognize the deceit of her actions. “Do I live? I don’t live, I want for a denouement that keeps being postponed...I can’t do anything, start anything, and change anything. I restrain myself, wait, invent amusements for myself – the Englishman’s family, writing, reading – but it’s all only a deception, the same morphine again” (704). Simultaneously, though gaining victory over the puzzled Vronsky in an argument about their situation, she “felt that alongside the love that bound them, there had settled between them an evil spirit of some sort of struggle, which she could not drive out of his heart and still less out of her own” (706). Eikhenbaum claims that this evil spirit drives her to death: “Anna suffers and perishes not from external causes—not because society condemns her and her husband will not grant her a divorce—but from passion itself, from the ‘evil spirit’ which had settled in her.”¹⁰³ Fulfillment of passion, or, in Chernyshevsky’s terms, fulfillment of desire, is Anna’s goal, and she attempts to satisfy it by looking at the world through the lens of radical-utilitarian philosophy.

102 Almost all of Anna’s reading during the novel could have an implied radical tinge, or at least connects to that in the world that Tolstoy saw as evil; she is never reading Pushkin. Most specifically, it seems from her conversation with Levin that she has read and approves of French naturalist author Émile Zola.

103 *Tolstoi in the Seventies*, 146.

In the scene leading up to Anna's death she seems to have lost touch with reality: she recognizes neither Annie's nor her own reflection in the mirror, and thinks that she is losing her mind (755). Her radical infection had deluded her to the extent that instead of imposing order upon the world, its supposed goal, it brings her (with great help from morphine, the ultimate elixir of nineteenth century medicine) to confusion. Her stream of consciousness in the final hours, as many critics comment, seems to show a complete mental breakdown. However, her thought, though scattered and indicative of an utter lack of understanding, is not merely the mark of insanity. Rather, it shows Anna's attempts to create knowledge and impose rational order upon the world. She smells paint, and asks why "they are always painting and building;" she notices a man bowing to her, and notices that "it was Annushka's husband" (757). She also considers her own situation, and decides to "hide the memory" of the past, since she cannot "tear the past out by the roots" (757). She does not realize that she has been hiding not only from the past but also from the present for quite some time, and only now is coming to face life.

"Here it is again! Again I understand everything!" says Anna on her way to the railroad station to intercept Vronsky (762). She continues to rationalize the world and her situation, articulating the hate that results from rational self-interest several times and deciding that humanity must deceive itself in some way to avoid suffering (763). The woman in her compartment, echoing both Anna's earlier statement and Chernyshevsky's sentiment, tells her "Man has been given reason in order to rid himself of that which troubles him." "The words," Tolstoy adds, "were like a response to Anna's thought." She understands on some level that her particular deceit rests on the foundation of rational thought, reason, and she uses it one final time, deciding "reason was given us in order to rid ourselves of [our pain]. So I must rid myself of it" (766). Her reason has demanded that she snuff out the possibility of future children earlier

in the novel; now it demands that she snuff out the candle of her own life.

Anna's radical infection does not directly cause her suicide; nevertheless, it quietly pushes her toward the train. Rationalism and the replacement of spiritual struggle with science are symptomatic of the infection, and Anna fails to cope with suffering because she seeks its cure in rational doctrine. "For Tolstoj, at that period of life, it was the force of nature, which he once worshiped—the physical side of man—that could lead him only to evil if it was not checked by a spiritual force."¹⁰⁴ Science does not provide answers to Anna's troubles, but only fleeting delusion; rationalism presents death as the only way to eliminate suffering when Anna thinks all other options have failed. Anna's reason continually gains momentum over the course of the novel, and that train is difficult to stop once it is in motion.

Konstantin Levin and Tolstoy's Cure for Radical Infection

Through Konstantin Dmitrich Levin, a thinly veiled self-portrait, Tolstoy expresses his unease with the state of society. Unlike Anna, but like Raskolnikov, Levin arduously tests ideas to see if they have social or personal value. Unlike Raskolnikov, however, he does not need to commit a crime to see the errors of 'new ideas.' Indeed, these ideas are no longer new, but have infected Russian society. Tolstoy shows his belief that conversion to faith requires "toil and suffering" in Levin's struggle to find clear existential meaning.¹⁰⁵ He ultimately finds that humanity should not base life on material improvement, new social structures, or new technology, but should instead try to live naturally and in direct and harmonious relation with God, family and the land.

At the beginning of the novel Levin broadly describes his earlier goals, which reflect the intelligentsia's utopianism, to Kitty during their first meeting at the skating rink: "I used to be a passionate skater; I wanted to achieve perfection" (29). Stenbock-Fermor notes that "living an

104 Stenbock-Fermor 98.

105 Ibid 56.

honest, pure and occupied life was not enough for Tolstoj's mouthpiece in the novel...he had to strive towards perfection, or at least self-improvement.”¹⁰⁶ Although Levin no longer skates, his desire for perfection remains a part of his thinking. He also advocates pursuit of personal interest, but rejects the utilitarian claim of a connection between personal interest and the common good. His management of the estate and conception of domestic happiness reiterate this desire for a sort of utopian perfection. “His notion of marriage...was the chief concern of life, on which all happiness depended” (95). Levin creates an ideal for himself, first of a family, then of a wife, and then attempts to fulfill it. When Kitty, his ideal woman, rejects him, he devotes himself to the theoretical and practical construction of an ideal estate, partially as a distraction from his unrealized domestic hopes.¹⁰⁷

These idealizations evoke Chernyshevsky's conception of science's explanatory power. Levin wants to develop a new scientific discipline, “scientific farming,” which “must be like a natural science, observing given phenomena, and the worker” to supplant political economy (161). He hopes to reduce the role of the muzhik to a variable; his book relies on the premise that “the character of the worker had to be taken as an absolute in farming, like climate and soil” (152). At least in practice there is little difference between this view of people and his views on dairy farming, whereby a cow is “merely a machine for processing feed into milk” (268). In his interactions with his peasants, he “continually noticed new traits in them, changed his previous opinions and formed new ones” (238). The muzhik, despite his distinctive character, is also a machine part in a larger system designed for a particular goal.

Levin, who studied the natural sciences at the university, displays considerable faith in

106 Ibid 57.

107 Levin's half-brother Koznyshev engages in a similar idealization, which contributes to his inability to propose to Varvara Andreevna. He is a more high-minded and liberal thinker than Levin, and Tolstoy satirizes that part of the intelligentsia (as many, including Chernyshevsky, were awkward with women) while showing its falsity.

the abilities of science. 'Constant observation,' Levin's way of understanding the world, also mirrors Chernyshevsky's approach (as well as Bazarov's), though without his physiological homogenization of all mankind. For the radical intelligentsia the natural sciences have replaced religious faith and all other moral philosophy. Furthermore, Levin's book "was based, though he did not notice it, on a critique of all the old books on farming," words immediately evocative of Pisarev's nihilist agenda.

Levin studies political economy, including Mill, one of the precursors of Chernyshevsky's philosophic system, "hoping at any moment to find a solution to the questions that preoccupied him" (341). He considers communism, socialism, labor collectives, and the idea of class struggle after discussing these themes with his brother Nikolai, and even acknowledges a sort of class struggle taking place on his own estate. He tries to alleviate the struggle between himself and the peasants by imposition of rational order on the estate, but to no avail; these obviously Chernyshevskian ideas fail to answer his questions.

Even before this, however, Levin starts understand the problems with these philosophies. New ideas occasionally seem promising, but rational argument, rather than heartfelt conviction, consistently motivates work for the 'common good' (239). Levin wants to find answers in philosophy, but notices that philosophers consistently fail to unite "these scientific conclusions about the animal origin of man, about reflexes, biology and sociology," ideas certainly associated with Chernyshevsky's philosophy, with his personal "questions about the meaning of life and death"; they even "hastily retreat" from them (24). Existential angst, brought on by the visit of his tubercular brother and his failed attempt to construct domestic happiness with Kitty, prompts Levin to earnestly structure his estate, but this occupation offers no answer to the questions afflicting him. He cannot find an answer to the question of what he, the peasantry, or Russia,

should do.

The circumstances of Levin's engagement intimate answers to these questions. He and Kitty abandon the general conversation at Stiva's dinner party in favor of private conversation. Tolstoy presents two very different ways to understand others in this scene. The discussion at the dinner table focuses on the 'woman question' and nihilism; the interlocutors, including Sergei Ivanovich, Karenin, and Turovtsyn (with Dolly and Prince Alexander Dmitrievich playing the jocular foils to their liberal ideas), think in the rational and 'modern' way. They ultimately gain no greater understanding of the issues they discuss and decide nothing. In the drawing room, on the other hand, Levin and Kitty play a child's game of *secrétaire*, wordlessly writing the first letters of the each word in a sentence, understanding (to Levin's bewilderment) each other's thoughts without rationality playing a role at all.

Levin's reliance on rationality had contributed to their earlier failure to connect, and although he still idealizes Kitty, he approaches the situation quite differently. Earlier he had sought her out with a rational plan in mind; but now at the Oblonskys', he lets events transpire of their own accord. This scene gives Levin a hint about the way that he should live: he must be at peace with the world and its workings, rather than attempting to impose his rational order upon it; rather than always pursuing knowledge, he must sometimes simply accept trans-rational truth.

The promise of fulfilling his marital ideal obscures all Levin's other concerns: "I'm happy," he says while preparing for the wedding, "and my happiness can be no greater or smaller whatever you do" (437). Levin fulfills Orthodox rituals required for marriage at the bequest of the Shcherbatskys, and the priest suggests religious answers to Levin's questions. Levin hears these arguments but cannot yet absorb them, his thinking obscured by the promise of marriage and his rational arguments against God. With his ideal wife, an ideal family will follow; he still

feels he doesn't need God for meaning. This begins to change during the wedding ceremony. He suddenly senses that "all his thoughts about marriage, all his dreams of how he would arrange his life, were mere childishness" (454). This feeling that defies his understanding is the answer that he seeks, but he cannot understand it so long as he only develops his life along rational lines.

Levin and Kitty forgo a honeymoon abroad and instead depart for the country.¹⁰⁸ Levin and Kitty's marriage, from Tolstoy's perspective, is certainly a good thing; Levin's 'ideal woman' in reality is not as he imagined her, but this does not ultimately lessen his love for her. Similarly, it soon becomes clear that they cannot realize the ideal life that Levin predicted and hoped for. Within three months of family life Levin, though happy, "saw at every step that it was not what he had imagined" (479). While aware of the strife endemic in the lives of all married couples, he felt that his marriage would be different. He will achieve the ideal because of his ideal woman. However, within three months after the wedding, he and Kitty begin to argue over the same trifles as every other married couple. Their life in a family novel cannot run smoothly on tracks like the marriages of *What is to Be Done?*. Chernyshevsky presented his own sort of domestic ideal, and Tolstoy shows the dangers of attempting to achieve this sort of utopian arrangement.

In terms of Levin's progression, the death of Nikolai is a positive thing. It tests Levin's convictions and provides another glimpse at truth. Levin knows that his brother's death must occur, and because of this he cannot act. Kitty also realizes this, but that realization only provokes care and sympathy for Nikolai. Levin is frozen by his inability to decide what is advantageous: to stay with his brother or leave him, to talk about death or banalities. Reason and rational thought fail him: "he could not help knowing that he was more intelligent than his wife,"

108 As noted above, it is ironic that Vronsky and Anna go on a continental tour immediately after Anna leaves Karenin's house, while Levin and Kitty decide against it. Furthermore, Tolstoy juxtaposes their plot threads quite clearly at this point: just as Levin and Kitty leave for the country, their counterparts conclude their tour and settle in Italy.

yet she understands what to do when he does not (496). Kitty does not avoid thinking, but has no need to rationalize the situation: she simply acts according to her heart and in doing so attends not only to Nikolai, but to Levin also. Levin's head provides none of the answers that Kitty's heart does.

Nikolai experiences a sudden conversion during his final rites that Levin cannot understand. "Levin knew his brother and the train of his thought; he knew that his unbelief had come not because it was easier for him to live without faith, but because his beliefs had been supplanted step by step by modern scientific explanations of the phenomena of the world" (499). Levin fails to realize that the problems in Nikolai's thinking exist in his own as well, and he decries Nikolai's conversion as false while at the same time appealing to God to save both of them. Levin almost empirically attempts to test God; much like Karenin's 'forgiveness,' 'faith' is a stimulus from which he expects some clear advantage. God 'fails' this empiric test with the death of Levin's brother and Levin feeling no divine consolation. Levin's mind cannot lead him to God, nor can it save his brother.

"They all desired only one thing – that [Nikolai] die as soon as possible – yet, concealing it, they gave him medicine from vials, went looking for medicines and doctors, and deceived him, and themselves, and each other. All this was a lie, a foul, insulting and blasphemous lie" (502). Levin notices the deceptive nature of his materialist convictions, that they cannot truly make the most crucial moments of life more bearable, but only create an illusion. Kitty, with her exemplary care and compassion for Levin and his brother, begins to occupy the place that rationality and materialism used to fill in Levin's thought. Levin's convictions fall to pieces through his brother's death and Kitty's influence, and Levin begins to understand through feeling instead of 'reason.'

Within months Kitty is ready to give birth, but “the term was long past when, by the surest calculations of people who knew about such things, Kitty ought to have given birth” (671). Levin already feels that the intervention of science is completely unnecessary. Nonetheless, it would, in Chernyshevsky's rational world, still determine a safe, calm, and rational birth. The birth has various inevitable (though) minors complications, leading Levin to question further the rational underpinnings of science.

Levin's trepidation during Kitty's delivery of their son brings him closer to faith in God. “Lord, forgive us and help us,’ he constantly repeated to himself...turning to God just as trustfully and simply as in his childhood and early youth” (713). In the scene even the generally traditional Shcherbatsky family shows belief in the unequivocal benefice of scientific progress that Chernyshevsky detailed in “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy.” Science's answers are authoritative, and therefore society ignores its potential for failure. However, it fails to diminish Levin's natural apprehensions about the uncertainty of childbirth and, indeed, about life itself. Levin instead turns to God, now more honestly than he did at his brother's deathbed, asking for mercy and forgiveness instead of demanding the result he wants.

Arriving in Kitty's room after she has given birth, “Levin felt himself instantly transported into the former, ordinary world, but radiant now with such a new light of happiness that he could not bear it” (716). He thinks he has come closer to achieving his long-cherished ideal of family life. So close is he to the ideal, he thinks, that “it seemed to him something superfluous, an over-abundance, and for a long time he could not get used to it” (716).¹⁰⁹ Levin looks at his son, who should increase his happiness, but the reality of life does not match his

109 Tolstoy 716. Levin's situation recalls the tension between Chernyshevsky's 'is' and 'should be' in *What Is to Be Done?*: life for his protagonists already seems perfect to them, yet they aspire for utopia, sure that their happiness will be greater there.

utopian image of family life. “Levin sighed with dismay...It was not at all the feeling he had expected” (718).

Levin finally abandons the 'new convictions' [*noviye ubezhdeniya*] of his adulthood when he returns to the estate. He realizes upon reflection that they “imperceptibly, during the period from twenty to thirty-four years of age, had come to replace his childhood and adolescent beliefs,” and is horrified by his progression from beliefs of the heart to convictions of the mind (785). The scene at the Moscow train station at the end of the novel indicates that it is summer 1877, when Levin is thirty-four years old.¹¹⁰ He was a twenty-year-old student at the university, a hotbed of radical student thought at the time, around 1863, the year of publication of *What Is to Be Done?*, and soon after the publication of *Fathers and Sons* in 1862.¹¹¹ It is clear that Levin, like many educated Russians, became 'infected' by radical thinking during Chernyshevsky's heyday.

Levin began to radically rethink how to live when Kitty was giving birth: like Raskolnikov, he is intellectually 'delivered' and 'reborn' after a painful period of contemplation. “He could not admit that he had known the truth [during Kitty's labor] and was now mistaken...He was in painful discord with himself and strained all the forces of his soul to get out of it” (787). Levin tries to resolve this discord with various answers provided by philosophers of all eras, “convinced that he would not find an answer in the materialists,” whose scientific answers had replaced all of the beliefs of his youth (787, 785-86). But mere cognition cannot provide him with peace, and he finally sees the shortcomings of empiric science and rational

¹¹⁰ Part VIII first appeared in 1877 (Tolstoy, *PSS*, vol. 19, 397). The action could not take place any later than 1877, based on the chronology of the Serbo-Turkish War, it takes place at earliest in summer 1876. The exact date is not so important so the general climate of a decade and a half before.

¹¹¹ This is to say nothing of the multitude of radical 'thick journals' (*tolstiyie zhurnali*) and translations of Western philosophic, literary, and academic works available at the time.

thought: “what he called his convictions were not only ignorance but were a way of thinking that made the knowledge he needed impossible.”¹¹² Utterly adrift without the false security of his former convictions, he turns to his work (especially to physical labor) to escape his thoughts. What seems like Karenin-esque escapism is in fact a fortuitous trans-rational part of the answer he seeks; he feels some sort of peace when he stops trying to fit the world and his emotions into a rational structure.

The final change in Levin occurs as abruptly as it does in Raskolnikov. Both characters accept God only once they realize the full failure of their previous convictions; both finally realize their own errors as well as society's failure to see that its way of life does not provide answers, but only covers up the way mankind should live. Levin discovers the error at the center of his prior thinking: “Reason discovered the struggle for existence and the law which demands that everyone who hinders the satisfaction of my desires should be throttled. That is the conclusion of reason. Reason could not discover love for the other, because it's unreasonable” (797). He now understands the truth of his heart: that he cannot live by reason, but must live by love.

The soul, not the rationalized convictions of society and the radical intelligentsia, provides Levin with understanding of the way he should live. “Yes, what I know, I know not by reason, but because it has been given to me, revealed to me, and I know it in my heart” (799). This understanding is entirely unlike the sort of knowledge that the intelligentsia, and Levin himself, sought. Chernyshevsky founded his philosophy on empiric knowledge of physiology, which is the same for each man; Levin realizes that the resultant utopian social harmony is a

112 Tolstoy 786. As has often been noted, Tolstoy presents autobiography in Levin's hopes for answers in Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will and his inability to believe in the religious primacy of the Orthodox Church, or even in its greatest theologians. See Stenbock-Fermor, *The Architecture of Anna Karenina*, and Eikhenbaum, *Tolstoi in the Seventies*, for more on Tolstoy's history with both Schopenhauer and Orthodoxy.

chimera, and that relations with others will never be perfect. He, along with the rest of mankind, should live according to the truth given to the heart and soul, even though humanity will necessarily remain imperfect.

Conclusion: Subcutaneous Implications of Radical Infection

...мы говорим только по принципу, а не по пристрастию, по убеждению, а не по личной надобности.
— Rakhmetov¹¹³

Levin and Raskolnikov progress away from rational models of utopia to trans-rational rebirth.

They begin with new, radical-utopian ideas of how to live, test them in the world, and in the end reject them. For Raskolnikov, the “idea,” his own in form but common in principle, is to have a “Napoleonic” impact on the world by “stepping over” a “meaningless” human life. Levin comes up with his own “new ideas,” such as “scientific farming,” and attempts to reorganize life on his estate in a more rational fashion.

Neither protagonist is able to “cure” himself of this radical “infection” without help. Kitty consistently shows Levin a way to live peaceably and responsibly in world. Sonya explicates Raskolnikov's sins, but does not force any change; in Siberia she helps Raskolnikov most and simply sitting next to him in silence. Neither woman attempts to impose any sort of new philosophy on her male counterpart. Both illuminate the truth by their simplicity and faith; their examples lead to understanding. Raskolnikov and Levin need interaction with the world in order to understand it: they cannot gain real wisdom through reading, rationalizing, or abstractly theorizing alone. But Raskolnikov and Levin cannot simply slough off their old beliefs without suffering for new ones. For both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, suffering is necessary in order to gain salvation; the cure for radical infection is by nature painful, though far better than living with the disease.

Levin and Raskolnikov initially buy into the logic of Chernyshevsky's worldview and moral philosophy; at least on the abstract level, both of them seem to believe in the idea of

¹¹³ Chernyshevsky, *Chto Delat'*, in *PSS*, 11:201.

rationally-based social progress, and aspire to utopian happiness for themselves and the world.

For Levin, this means domestic happiness, harmony with the peasantry, and personal contribution, through his book on agricultural economy, to the development of society; for Raskolnikov, it means satisfying his ego by fulfilling a Napoleonic role in world history and becoming humanity's benefactor. The means to achieving these ends, however, illuminate the problems of their thinking. Raskolnikov, in murdering another human being, sins against his fellow man, and by extension mankind. Levin lives in a society that makes him susceptible to the radical infection, and while he does not sin in the same extreme sense that Raskolnikov does, to a lesser degree he unknowingly falls prey to the same kind of arrogance that Raskolnikov displays. They err because of this arrogance: they believe that they can assert rational control over the world and mold it into their own utopias.

For Chernyshevsky Vera Pavlovna represents faith in and proselytism of a utopian ideology.¹¹⁴ The underlying implication is that Chernyshevsky's rational utilitarian system replaces all old (God-based) moral codes, and Chernyshevsky's characters serve dual aesthetic roles, with Vera Pavlovna leading their charge in her own reality and the reader's: they diagram the ways his system will spread for the reader while creating it for themselves. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy use their protagonists to subtly respond to utopian symbolism. Both novels end somewhat abruptly in rebirth, but Dostoevsky and Tolstoy do not need to send their protagonists back into society in order to make their readers understand their moral positions. Indeed, the fact that the characters do not return to society indicates Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's rejection of Chernyshevsky's notion of utopian development. Were they to return to society and actively try

¹¹⁴ Her first name, Vera, literally means 'faith;' her patronymic, 'son of Paul,' an allusion to the most important of Christ's apostles. Vera Pavlovna is always referred to by first name and patronymic, even by her husbands. Nobody in the novel refers to her by last name. Within the context of *What Is to Be Done?*, this may result from her changing surnames – from her maiden name, Rozalsky, to Lopukhov, and finally to Kirsanov. This 'rational' reason, however, is a part of Chernyshevsky's overarching Christian allegory.

to spread their ideas, the authors would seem to tacitly endorse the Chernyshevskian idea of pursuit of a new utopian social order and nullify their literary aesthetics along with their messages to Russian society.

While Raskolnikov and Levin manage to “disinfect” themselves and end up having tacit apostolic roles, most of the other characters in the novel do not. What Dostoevsky warns against in *Crime and Punishment* in the 1860s has fully infected Russian society of the 1870s in *Anna Karenina*. Society falls under the influence of Chernyshevsky's teachings, and remains blind to the true nature of the radical infection that has overtaken it.

For some, such as Anna and Vronsky, these convictions contribute to desire, eventually fulfilled, for literal death. This case, however, is extreme, and in Tolstoy's reality the immorality of adultery provides the impetus for this progression, while radical infection adds momentum. Society's fate seems more benign, but as it continues to live with its infection, any happiness it derives from it is false. The disease of radical ideas is self-perpetuating: the rigid and self-serving kind of rational thinking of characters like Karenin and Luzhin makes reevaluation unlikely, if not impossible. Most of society does not have Razumikhin's strength of will to see the danger in these ideas while using reason positively and altruistically for humanity; it is for this society that Dostoevsky and Tolstoy show the dangerous implications of radical ideas.

The arrogance of the radical intelligentsia permutes into a kind of bland, broadly-based social smugness. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy clearly show, through a wide variety of personae, that the radical intelligentsia has taken it upon itself to perform a role not given to man: to define happiness and then say how to achieve it. Progression to utopia, the goal of Chernyshevsky's philosophy, presumes that humanity can define moral law for itself. Anna and Vronsky, often completely unconsciously, create a moral code by which they can fulfill desire without suffering.

Raskolnikov presents this arrogance quite clearly, and Levin eventually responds to it with disgust; they are responding to the radical intelligentsia's assumptions about the power of humanity, the very foundations of its thinking.

Chernyshevsky bases his moral philosophy in “The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy” on the empiric conclusions of physiology. In doing so, he rejects the duality of man common to almost every preceding philosophical tradition. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy portray the consequent human condition, whether people accept this idea with its full logical implications or on a superficial level. The issue is not merely abrogation of God; nor do Dostoevsky or Tolstoy moralize about the radical *intelligenti*. Rather, they warn of the consequences of “new ideas” and remind contemporary society of what it stands to lose, or has already lost.

“Reason, in radical ideology, had come to be identified with the belief in a thoroughgoing determinism, which denied the existence of free will and hence the very possibility of moral choice; but Dostoevsky had become convinced that the human personality would never accept such a limitation on its freedom.”¹¹⁵ The metaphysical issue the existence of free will was unimportant to Dostoevsky; he simply worried about the implications of denying outright the possibility of free will. Whether it exists or not is irrelevant; humanity needs the belief in free will in order to live in the world in a morally responsible way.¹¹⁶ The two authors took an analogous approach to the questions of dualism and man's belief or non-belief in a higher power. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy had no interest in attempting to *prove*, rationally, their conclusion that God is necessary; they merely *show*, through art, that man needs responsibility to some higher

115 *The Miraculous Years*, 68.

116 It is worth note that at times Dostoevsky, from the narrator's perspective in *Crime and Punishment* and other works, manipulates this within the literary work. The consequences for characters who deny free will, or even feel a sense of metaphysical determinism, are almost always dire. However, at times Dostoevsky's narrator as well as Tolstoy's implies some sort of determinism in their descriptions of events and explanations of why they transpired. The issue, however, is one for the individual, not the creating author.

law or power than himself in order to live decently and with some sense of the intrinsic value of others.

Dostoevsky and Tolstoy portray the consequences of life when man defines his own moral code. Such a moral code, based on man's rational knowledge of human nature, aims to remove suffering from the world. As Dostoevsky and Tolstoy show, however, absence of suffering is not the same as happiness. That feeling is false, and can only comfort the individual who is unwilling to face the panoply of experience that is life. In order to live in the world, a person must accept that he or she will not be happy at all times; suffering is a part of life. The desire to extricate oneself from suffering is natural, but creating a moral philosophy around it leads not to some sort of utopian perfection, but instead towards a kind of living death. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy present God as the way to both accept suffering as an immutable part of the world and avoid the audacious egoism of the radical intelligentsia.

At the core of their arguments is a deep skepticism about the conception of humanity inherent in Chernyshevsky's thought. Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's novels reaffirm the necessity of man's duality. Without duality, the only higher power possible is Chernyshevsky's rational, cause-and-effect determinism, the basis of his utilitarian morality. Duality is necessary for the existence of a higher power that takes moral law out of humanity's hands; it negates rational need for altruism by acknowledging the soul's love for humanity.

Finally, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy do not dispute Chernyshevsky's belief that Russia has gone awry, and that something, in short, must be done. The radical intelligentsia and these two more conservative authors may even agree on many specific issues in Russian life. Thus, neither *Crime and Punishment* nor *Anna Karenina* portrays a simple struggle between good and evil; neither novel simplistically condemns the radicals for their beliefs. Rather, Dostoevsky and

Tolstoy, seeing and predicting the consequences of Chernyshevsky's thought, plead with the intelligentsia to reconsider their ideas of *how* to change Russia, and *where* to take her.

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